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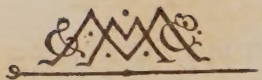
# THE WORKS

OF

# SHAKESPEARE

VOL. VIII



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# THE WORKS

OF

# SHAKESPEARE

EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES

BY

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# JULIUS CÆSAR

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

JULIUS CÆSAR.

OCTAVIUS CÆSAR,
MARCUS ANTONIUS,
M. ÆMILIUS LEPIDUS, } triumvirs after the death of Julius Cæsar.

CICERO,
PUBLIUS,
POPILIUS LENA, } senators.

MARCUS BRUTUS,
CASSIUS,
CASCA,
TREBONIUS,
LIGARIUS,
DECIUS BRUTUS,
METELLUS CIMBER,
CINNA, } conspirators against Julius Cæsar.

FLAVIUS and MARULLUS, tribunes.

ARTEMIDORUS of Cnidos, a teacher of Rhetoric.

A Soothsayer.

CINNA, a poet. Another Poet.

LUCILIUS,
TITINIUS,
MESSALA,
Young CATO,
VOLUMNIUS, } friends to Brutus and Cassius.

VARRO,
CLITUS,
CLAUDIUS,
STRATO,
LUCIUS,
DARDANIUS, } servants to Brutus.

PINDARUS, servant to Cassius.

CALPURNIA, wife to Cæsar.

PORTIA, wife to Brutus.

Senators, Citizens, Guards, Attendants, etc.

SCENE: *Rome: the neighbourhood of Sardis: the neighbourhood of Philippi.*

### Duration of Time

*Dramatic Time.* — Six days represented on the stage, with intervals.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Day 1. | I. 1., 2. | Interval. |
| ,, 2. | I. 3. | |
| ,, 3. | II., III. | Interval. |
| ,, 4. | IV. 1. | Interval. |
| ,, 5. | IV. 2., 3. | Interval. |
| ,, 6. | V. | |

*Historic Time.*—From October 45 B.C. (Cæsar's Triumph), or February 44 B.C. (the Lupercalia)—I. 1. synchronises the two occasions, cf. vv. 35 and 72—to autumn 42 B.C. (battle of Philippi).

---

*Dramatis Personæ.* First given by Rowe. For *Antonius*, *Marullus*, *Varro*, *Claudius*, Ff have *Antonio*, *Murellus*, *Varrus*, *Claudio*, all clearly unauthentic. The name *Calpurnia* appears always as *Calphurnia;* Shakespeare found both forms in Plutarch; it remains uncertain which he wrote. The true form (Calpurnia) is thence adopted by most modern edd.

# INTRODUCTION

*Julius Cæsar* was first published in the Folio of 1623. The Cambridge editors justly emphasise the extreme correctness of the text there given, and conjecture that this play 'may have been (as the preface falsely implied that all were) printed from the original MS. of the author.' It was entered in the Stationers' Register, November 8, 1623, among the plays of Shakespeare 'not formerly entered to other men,' and then first published. First Edition.

The most important evidence for the date of *Julius Cæsar* is the following passage in Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs, or the Life and Death of Sir John Oldcastle* (printed in 1601):— Date of Composition.

> The many-headed multitude were drawn
> By Brutus' speech, that Cæsar was ambitious.
> When eloquent Mark Antonie had shewn
> His virtues, who but Brutus then was vicious?

Shakespeare's only known source, Plutarch, merely mentions the funeral speech of Brutus; summarises Antony's in three lines of quite a different purport; and knows nothing of the 'many-headed multitude's' ready change of front, exhibited with peculiarly Shakespearean sarcasm in the play. The inference is forcible that Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* was already familiar to the stage when Weever wrote. Weever, however, tells us that his *Mirror* was 'some two

years ago [*i.e.* in 1599] made fit for print.' The style and metre of *Julius Cæsar* are compatible enough with the date of *Henry V*.[1] But its close and numerous links between our play and *Hamlet* speak for the date 1600-1; and the lost play of *Cæsar's Fall* on which, in 1602, Webster, Middleton, Munday, Drayton, were at work for the rival company would have been a somewhat tardy counterblast to an old piece of 1599. Other signs of the deep impression it made point to the later date. *Julius Cæsar* was certainly not unconcerned in the revival of the fashion for tragedies of revenge with a ghost in them, which suddenly set in with Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* and Chettle's *Hoffman* in 1601. Jonson made his own fashions. But the sudden appearance of the man of little Latin in the arena of Roman tragedy put him on his mettle, and there can be little doubt that his massive *Sejanus* (1603) conveyed an unavowed challenge.[2] If *Julius Cæsar*, however, greatly stimulated tragedy at large, it struck a blight upon the dramas of Cæsar's death, hitherto a very flourishing growth. After the abortive effort of Henslowe's men, and Alexander's probably quite independent tragedy, printed in Scotland in 1604,[3] no English poet again attempted to vie with Shakespeare. In rude German prose *Julius Cæsar* was repeatedly acted by the comedians abroad.[4] A puppet-play, doubtless founded on the drama, is mentioned in

[1] With which it is in fact classed, on purely metrical grounds, by the latest investigator of Shakespeare's metre, Goswin König (*Der Vers in Sh.'s Dramen*, p. 137).

[2] It will suffice to mention here Mr. Fleay's belief that Jonson abridged and corrected *Julius Cæsar* into its present form in 1607 (still affirmed in his *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 214).

[3] *Julius Cæsar*, by William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Stirling. It was republished in London, 1607. It is a learned work.

[4] First at Dresden, 1626 (Creizenach, *Schauspiele d.engl. Com.* p. xlii).

1605. A century later the Duke of Buckingham divided the play into two tragedies, *Cæsar* and *Brutus*, neither of which was ever performed.[1] And in Voltaire's *Brutus* and *La Mort de César* Shakespeare achieved his first (as yet very qualified) triumphs over the dramatic traditions of the Continent.

The suggestion that *Julius Cæsar* was prompted by the conspiracy of Essex in January to February 1601 (Furnivall, *Acad.*, September 18, 1875, and Preface to *Leopold Shakspere*) is interesting, but the links are far too slender to support any inference as to the date.

Source of the Plot.

As has just been stated, the *Fall of Cæsar* was familiar on English stages before Shakespeare wrote, as well as the kindred subject of Cæsar and Pompey, —a kind of First Part to the History. The very early (and perhaps mythical) *Julius Cæsar* recorded to have been performed at Whitehall in 1562 possibly included both. A lost play, *Cæsar Interfectus*, by Dr. Eedes, was acted at Oxford in 1582. Gosson mentions a *Cæsar and Pompey* in his *School of Abuse* (1579), and Henslowe another in his Diary (1594). None of these survives, but Shakespeare seems to be cognisant of their existence. His opening scene is addressed to a public familiar with the history of Pompey and Pompey's sons;[2] Polonius' description of his performance of the murdered Cæsar at the University, indicates that that subject was in vogue there; and some apparently purposeless deviations from Plutarch are probably concessions to an established dramatic or literary tradition. Thus the famous 'Et tu Brute' had occurred in the *True*

[1] *The Tragedy of Cæsar* and *The Tragedy of Brutus*, both printed 1722. Their relation to the original has been elaborately handled by O. Mielck, *J.B.* xxiv. 27 f.

[2] Similarly v. 1. 102 implies familiarity with the suicide of Cato.

*Tragedy* (1595); and Chaucer already placed the murder in the Capitol instead of in Pompey's Curia, though Shakespeare still makes Cæsar's bleeding body lie along the base of Pompey's statue.

But Shakespeare undoubtedly drew his materials substantially from Plutarch's lives of Cæsar, Brutus, and Antony, as translated by Sir Thomas North.[1] The translations had probably become as early familiar to him, and interested him as keenly, as the nearly contemporary folio of Holinshed.[2] In now closing his Holinshed and opening his Plutarch Shakespeare turned from a homely though picturesque annalist to a philosophic and sentimental biographer, from a naïve chronicler of events to a literary and self-conscious exponent of men. For Plutarch personality was, if not the supreme, certainly the most attractive and intelligible factor in history; public events interested him by their bearing upon character, and his peculiar art and charm lay in following his heroes among the intimacies of their private life, and allowing them to reveal themselves in their familiar converse, their table-talk, their memorable epigrams and repartees. He had, moreover, the moralist's eye for ethical problems, for conflicts of motive and passion and conscience. And neither of these traits can have been

[1] *The Lives of the Noble Grecians, compared together by that grave learned philosopher and historiographer* PLUTARKE OF CHAERONIA. As the title-page candidly states, North had translated the French translation of Amyot, to which his own owes something of its relative accomplishment, as prose, and a few errors (*e.g.* Decius for Decimus Brutus). North is reprinted in the *Tudor Translations*, and the Lives in question in Hazlitt's *Shakspeare's Library*. There is an exhaustive study of Shakespeare's use of Plutarch by Delius in *J.B.* xvii. 67.

[2] Bassanio's comparison of Portia to her namesake 'Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia' (*Mer. of Ven.* i. 1. 166); Portia's own name; and the deep admiration for Cæsar betrayed by a host of earlier allusions all indicate this.

without relish for an intellect ripening towards the profounder psychology and the graver questionings of *Measure for Measure*, *Hamlet*, and *Cæsar*. Hence, while Holinshed had furnished little more than the outline of the action to *Richard III.* or *Richard II.*, the far subtler tragic conflict of Brutus, with almost every detail of the action, and a hundred vivid traits of character, are already clearly foreshadowed in Plutarch. But it is in the drama that the implicit eloquence of the subject is first revealed. The means by which this is effected are, however, wonderfully simple. The language, though charged with poetry, is of a pellucid simplicity which Shakespeare had rarely approached; and through large tracts of it Plutarch's pedestrian narrative survives, only lifted to a higher potency and purged of the last suggestion of banality and rhetoric. But at a few decisive points Shakespeare intervenes. Brutus' monologue in ii. 1. is wholly original. Of his oration after Cæsar's death, Plutarch records merely that it was designed 'to win the favour of the people and to justify that they had done.'[1] Shakespeare gives him a speech strikingly unlike any of his other speeches in style, though full of his character;[2] a speech

[1] Even these words strictly describe a previous harangue on the Capitol.

[2] The style of *Brutus' speech* was evidently adopted on Plutarch's hint that *in writing Greek* he affected 'the brief compendious manner of speech of the Lacedæmonians'; writing *e.g.* to the Pergamenians: 'I understand you have given Dolabella money; if you have done it willingly, you confess you have offended me; if against your wills, show it then by giving me willingly.' The model of such a speech, in a parallel situation, Shakespeare had at hand, as Mr. Gollancz has plausibly suggested, in the harangue of Belleforest's Hamlet to the people after killing the king (cf. also Kuno Fischer, *Hamlet*, p. 104). One more of the inexhaustible points of contact between the two plays, and one more indication that Belleforest was known to Shakespeare, though the first attested English edition is of 1608.

moreover in prose,[1] which he nowhere else uses. Antony's oration is represented by the following:—

'When Cæsar's body was brought into the market-place, Antonius making his funeral Oration in praise of the dead according to the ancient custom of Rome, and perceiving that his words moved the common people to compassion: he framed his eloquence to make their hearts yearn the more, and taking Cæsar's gown all bloudy in his hand, he layed it open to the sight of them all, shewing what a number of cuts and holes it had in it. Therewith all the people fell presently into such a rage and mutinie that there was no more order kept among the common people.'[2]

Plutarch assures us that Antony was eloquent: but he left it to Shakespeare to convert his blunt Casca-like report into the superb

> You all do know this mantle: I remember
> The first time ever Cæsar put it on, etc.

The action of the play is strikingly clear and simple. In this point of dramatic technique, as in others, it differs widely from the other Roman plays. The bewildering complexity of the history of Antony and Cleopatra has its counterpart in that play. A like chaos on a smaller scale filled the period intervening between Cæsar's death and Philippi, and

[1] Why did Shakespeare make Brutus here use prose? The question is excellently answered by Janssen (*Die Prosa in Sh.'s Dramen*, p. 41). Brutus is an idealist. He loves 'the people' in idea, but is constrained when addressing them face to face. He has eloquence and passion for Antony; but, unlike Antony, only the dry language of understanding for the mob. 'The words "Peace, freedom and liberty," stick in his throat, and he gives them instead a mathematical demonstration of his honesty.'

[2] *Life of J. Cæsar* (Hazlitt: Shakspeare Library, vol. iii. p. 186). A similar but less detailed passage occurs in his *Life of M. Antony*, ib. p. 331.

Plutarch patiently chronicles the undecisive movements and counter-movements which for a while held destiny in suspense: the negotiations between the conspirators and the Senate, its vote of thanks to Brutus and Antonius, the feud between Antony and Octavius, and Brutus' voluntary withdrawal from Italy — not for his own safety, but foreseeing the overthrow of Rome; his sojourn at Athens, where he 'went daily to hear philosophic lectures'; his quixotic humanities in the field and reiterated dissensions with Cassius; finally the two battles at Philippi, three weeks apart, in which Cassius and Brutus were separately vanquished. All this Shakespeare compresses into three critical moments: — Cæsar's funeral, and the final ruin of Brutus and Cassius in Italy; the camp at Sardis, and their quarrel; Philippi, and their overthrow. The quarrel (iv. 3.) is a wonderful example of concentration. Plutarch reports very briefly how on their first meeting 'they went into a little chamber together and bade every man avoid, and did shut the doors to them. Then they began to pour out their complaints one to the other, and grew hot and loud, earnestly accusing one another, and at length fell both a weeping.' In the height of their strife they are interrupted by the 'counterfeit Cynic,' Phaonius (the Poet of the play). On the following day they again meet and exchange grave reproaches: Brutus has condemned and noted Lucius Pella; Cassius remonstrates; Brutus bids him remember the Ides of March; but neither now passes the limits of debate. Finally, on the closing page of the Life, Plutarch records the death of Portia. All these four strands are interwoven in Shakespeare's wonderful scene. The 'hot and loud complaints' and 'weeping' of their first meeting are made

articulate with the arguments of their second. The intrusion of the Cynic, instead of 'breaking off their strife for that time,' throws a gleam of relieving burlesque upon their restored harmony; and the tidings of Portia's death, undermining the sources of Brutus' Stoic self-control, give the clue to the uncontrolled outburst, as anger, of the passion so sternly suppressed as grief. 'I did not think you could have been so angry,' says Cassius, and his anger is as amazing to the reader as it is to Cassius, until this subtle trait renders it natural and pathetic.

Brutus.

Plutarch's character-drawing, like his narrative, suffers from his twofold rôle of historian and moralist. His Brutus is a compromise between the humane idealist whom he wished to portray and the grasping *doctrinaire* whom he was too honest wholly to efface. His lofty Stoic condescends to a vulgar rivalry with Cassius for the election to the prætor's chair; nay, at Pharsalia, the general whose humanity amazed friend and foe promises his soldiers 'the sack of two cities if they fought like men,'—an embarrassing inconsistency for which his biographer rather awkwardly apologises as the 'only fault to be found in all Brutus' life, and that is not to be gainsaid.' The faults of Shakespeare's Brutus are exposed with a far surer hand; he is nevertheless a loftier character: no soil of meanness, cruelty, or vulgar rivalry complicates the tragedy of his fate. The personal relation to Cæsar which he violates 'for the general' (good) is a more intimate one. Rome calls him 'Cæsar's angel.' In Plutarch, Cæsar 'did not trust him overmuch,' and included him with Cassius in his dislike of 'lean and whitely-faced' men. Brutus on his part was 'incensed' by Cassius against the tyrant. The monologue which Shakespeare puts in his mouth is a marvel of fanatical self-deception. It is not any actual 'tyranny' that

moves him, for he owns that 'the quarrel will bear no colour for the thing' Cæsar 'is'; it is not even the abstract name of king which moves him, but a 'change of nature' which that might induce. 'Then lest it may, prevent.' Brutus, like Hamlet, is set in action by the bidding of a ghost; but his ghost is not the discloser of a crying wrong which he groans to be summoned to set right, but a true phantom which drives him headlong to the redress of wrongs which even his biassed reason can only discover in a hypothetical futurity.

Shakespeare's Cassius is, to a far greater degree than his Brutus, Plutarch made eloquent. The contrast between the philosophic and the self-seeking politician appealed strongly to the Greek's academic intellect, and he brings it out with incisive sharpness. He admits that Brutus' tactics were disastrous to the conspirators and to the republican cause. But he has no eye for the pathos of Cassius' devotion to the friend whose errors he recognised and suffered by. This trait Shakespeare has sympathetically seized in the famous 'quarrel scene'; Cassius' hot temper blazes rashly out; but Brutus' answering passion overwhelms him with grief and despair— Cassius.

> Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,
> . . . . . .
> For Cassius is aweary of the world.

But the brilliant figure of Antony owes far more to Shakespeare. Plutarch's Antony is a scheming soldier, who carries his way by practical sagacity and ruthless cruelty. Shakespeare's is in addition to all this a consummate artist, and an artist by temperament as well as by his technical mastery of effect. Shakespeare has deliberately charged his eloquence with the task of inflaming the people which Plutarch's Antony achieves mainly by strategic skill. He even Antony.

aggravates the difficulty of the task to throw into relief the intellectual brilliance of the achievement. The Roman multitude, in Plutarch, need little incitement to rise upon the slayers of Cæsar. The first act of the conspirators is to take refuge in the Capitol; when Brutus at last ventures down, and addresses the people, they 'showed, immediately after, that they were not at all contented with the murder.' The next day, by Antony's arrangement, Cæsar's will is read to them, and they are 'marvellously sorry for him.' The funeral oration which Antony then delivers has but to fire a train, not to turn a tide.

Cæsar.

If Shakespeare idealises Brutus, Cassius, Antony, he has notoriously depressed Cæsar. Plutarch's own Cæsar is far from being the Cæsar of Mommsen; and Shakespeare has touched the slightly disparaging portrait into something like caricature. He dwells with curious persistence on the physical infirmities of the ageing dictator, and swells their number with others of his own devising,—a falling sickness, a deafness in one ear. He accentuates every trait of superstition,—the touching at the Lupercal, the consultation of the sacrificers, the senile vacillation on the morning of the fatal Ides. Above all, he puts in the mouth of the man whose will has just responded so sensitively to the beck of dreams and omens, the most magnificent and sincere professions of immovable constancy. All critics of the play have felt that this caustic treatment of Cæsar needed explanation. The early commentators found one, readily enough, in Shakespeare's limited classical knowledge; and one of his recent biographers has reinforced it, late in the day, with a splendid but irrelevant picture of the real Cæsar.[1] But it is certain that Shakespeare did not think meanly of the 'foremost man in all the

[1] Brandes, *Shakespeare* (E.T.) i. 361 f.

world.' Others have suggested more plausibly that Cæsar is presented as he appeared to the conspirators. Certainly he at times seems to justify Cassius' jaundiced vision of him in his weaker moments.[1] But what may hold of Cassius certainly does not hold of Brutus. His Cæsar has no personal faults, and he has never 'known when his affections sway'd more than his reason'; his Cæsar is doomed for what he might become, not for what he is. Brutus alone distinguishes between the man Cæsar and what he stood for. At the outset he would gladly spare the man if he could annihilate the spirit. 'O, that we then could come by Cæsar's spirit, and not dismember Cæsar!' It is his fatal illusion to believe that Cæsar's spirit will perish when Cæsar is dismembered. But Cæsar is no sooner dead than the tokens accumulate that Cæsarism is still alive; and they seem to be specially addressed to Brutus. 'Let Brutus be Cæsar!' cry the mob when he has spoken, confuting him by their very applause. When he looks on the dead body of Cassius his eyes are opened, and the thrilling cry that breaks from him—

> O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!
> Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords
> In our own proper entrails—

is the final confession of failure. The apparition of Cæsar's spirit is a visible embodiment of the invisible forces which are controlling the issues of the plot. Shakespeare here finely modified tradition to his own purpose. In the drama, as in Plutarch, the ghost replies to his question, 'I am thy evil spirit.' Shakespeare draws this trivial episode into touch with the very heart of the tragedy by identifying Brutus' evil

[1] Cassius' story of the swimming-match in Tiber, when Cæsar succumbed with a 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink' (i. 2. 111), is Shakespeare's.

spirit with 'the ghost of Cæsar.' Thus *Julius Cæsar* at the threshold of the tragic period already betrays that sense of mysterious persistences of spiritual energy which continually emerges in the tragedies and inspires some of their most haunting and thrilling moments;—energy which defies the accident of death—

> For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
> And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Brutus'

> O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!

is the pathetic recognition of that which Macbeth divines with his horror-stricken

> the time has been
> That, when the brains were out, the man would die.

Undoubtedly, however, Shakespeare's wonderful intuition of the potency of Cæsarism was facilitated by positive political prepossessions. He interpreted the Rome of Cæsar by the England of Elizabeth, and the analogy was sufficiently close to supply in a measure the place of genuine historical insight. Elizabeth, like Plutarch's Cæsar, was old and infirm, capricious and vain; her death was imminent and the succession not absolutely sure. The failure of Essex's fatuous rebellion may or may not have occurred when Shakespeare wrote; but in any case the monarchy itself must have seemed to him utterly beyond assault. His picture of the Roman demos is notoriously coloured by the Elizabethan's genial contempt for the masses. Plutarch's People, as we have seen, were far from being a *quantité négligeable* to a clever orator.

# JULIUS CÆSAR

## ACT I.

### SCENE I. *Rome. A street.*

*Enter* FLAVIUS, MARULLUS, *and certain* Commoners.

*Flav.* Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home:
Is this a holiday? what! know you not,
Being mechanical, you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day without the sign
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?
*First Com.* Why, sir, a carpenter.
*Mar.* Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
What dost thou with thy best apparel on?
You, sir, what trade are you?
*Sec. Com.* Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.
*Mar.* But what trade art thou? answer me directly.
*Sec. Com.* A trade, sir, that, I hope, I may

3. *mechanical*, of the artisan class.
3. *you ought not walk*, etc.; a regulation borrowed from English trade-guilds.
12. *directly*, without evasion.

use with a safe conscience; which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

*Mar.* What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what trade?

*Sec. Com.* Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me: yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

*Mar.* What meanest thou by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

*Sec. Com.* Why, sir, cobble you.

*Flav.* Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

*Sec. Com.* Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl: I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but with awl. I am, indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I recover them. As proper men as ever trod upon neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork.

*Flav.* But wherefore art not in thy shop today?
Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

*Sec. Com.* Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work. But, indeed, sir, we make holiday, to see Cæsar and to rejoice in his triumph.

*Mar.* Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome,
To grace in captive bonds his chariot-wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,

40. *senseless*, inanimate.

Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The live-long day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks,
To hear the replication of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

*Flav.* Go, go, good countrymen, and, for this fault,
Assemble all the poor men of your sort;
Draw them to Tiber banks, and weep your tears
Into the channel, till the lowest stream
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.

[*Exeunt all the Commoners.*

See, whether their basest metal be not moved;
They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.
Go you down that way towards the Capitol;
This way will I: disrobe the images,

56. *Pompey's blood*, i.e. his son, Cneius, who had fallen in the battle of Munda, the immediate occasion of Cæsar's Triumph. That 'blood' has this special reference is shown by Plutarch's emphatic statement, which Shakespeare clearly had in view, that this triumph was peculiarly offensive to the Romans 'because he had not overcome captains that were strangers, nor barbarous kings, but had destroyed the sons of the noblest man of Rome, whom fortune had overthrown' (*Shakspeare's Library*, iii. 172).

62. *sort*, class, rank.

66. *whether*, pronounced 'where.'

If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies.
*Mar.* May we do so?
You know it is the feast of Lupercal.
*Flav.* It is no matter; let no images
Be hung with Cæsar's trophies. I'll about,
And drive away the vulgar from the streets:
So do you too, where you perceive them thick.
These growing feathers pluck'd from Cæsar's wing
Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,
Who else would soar above the view of men
And keep us all in servile fearfulness. [*Exeunt.*

## Scene II *A public place.*

*Flourish. Enter* Cæsar; Antony, *for the course;* Calpurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, *and* Casca; *a great crowd following, among them a* Soothsayer.

*Cæs.* Calpurnia!
*Casca.* Peace, ho! Cæsar speaks.
*Cæs.* Calpurnia!
*Cal.* Here, my lord.
*Cæs.* Stand you directly in Antonius' way,

70. *ceremonies*, festal ornaments, the 'scarfs' of the next scene (v. 289); Plutarch says 'diadems.' In Plutarch's narrative, however, the offer of the 'diadem' to Cæsar, which Shakespeare places in the following scene, has already occurred. With him, the crowning of the images was a second attempt to sound the popular disposition after the collapse of the first: Shakespeare treats it as preliminary to this.

72. *the feast of Lupercal*, a feast of purification annually celebrated on the 15th of February, the month deriving its name from the purifying rite (*februare*).

78. *pitch*, height (a term in falconry for the height of the falcon's flight).

When he doth run his course. Antonius!

*Ant.* Cæsar, my lord?

*Cæs.* Forget not, in your speed, Antonius,
To touch Calpurnia; for our elders say,
The barren, touched in this holy chase,
Shake off their sterile curse.

*Ant.* I shall remember:
When Cæsar says 'do this,' it is perform'd.

*Cæs.* Set on; and leave no ceremony out.

[*Flourish.*

*Sooth.* Cæsar!

*Cæs.* Ha! who calls?

*Casca.* Bid every noise be still: peace yet again!

*Cæs.* Who is it in the press that calls on me?
I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music,
Cry 'Cæsar!' Speak; Cæsar is turn'd to hear.

*Sooth.* Beware the ides of March.

*Cæs.* What man is that?

*Bru.* A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.

*Cæs.* Set him before me; let me see his face.

*Cas.* Fellow, come from the throng; look upon Cæsar.

*Cæs.* What say'st thou to me now? speak once again.

4. *run his course;* the course of the Luperci, or priests of Lupercus, the god of fertility, at the Lupercalia, through the streets of the city. Plutarch's description (translated by North) is: 'That day there are divers noble men's sons, young men (and some of them magistrates themselves that govern them), which run naked through the city, striking in sport them they meet in their way, with leather thongs, hair and all on, to make them give place. And many noble women and gentlewomen also, go of purpose to stand in their way, and do put forth their hands to be stricken, . . . persuading themselves that being with child they shall have good delivery, and also being barren, that it will make them to conceive with child.'

9. *sterile curse*, curse of sterility.

18. *the ides of March*, March 15.

*Sooth.* Beware the ides of March.
*Cæs.* He is a dreamer; let us leave him: pass.
[*Sennet. Exeunt all except Brutus and Cassius.*
*Cas.* Will you go see the order of the course?
*Bru.* Not I.
*Cas.* I pray you, do.
*Bru.* I am not gamesome: I do lack some part
Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.
Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires;
I 'll leave you.
*Cas.* Brutus, I do observe you now of late:
I have not from your eyes that gentleness
And show of love as I was wont to have:
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over your friend that loves you.
*Bru.* Cassius,
Be not deceived: if I have veil'd my look,
I turn the trouble of my countenance
Merely upon myself. Vexed I am
Of late with passions of some difference,
Conceptions only proper to myself,
Which give some soil perhaps to my behaviours;
But let not therefore my good friends be grieved—
Among which number, Cassius, be you one—
Nor construe any further my neglect,
Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,
Forgets the shows of love to other men.
*Cas.* Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion;
By means whereof this breast of mine hath buried

35. *bear too stubborn and too strange a hand over*, keep (like a restive horse) too severely and unkindly in check.

40. *passions of some difference*, conflicting emotions.

42. *soil*, blemish.

Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?
*Bru.* No, Cassius; for the eye sees not itself,
But by reflection by some other things.
*Cas.* 'Tis just:
And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
That you have no such mirrors as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
That you might see your shadow. I have heard
Where many of the best respect in Rome,
Except immortal Cæsar, speaking of Brutus,
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes.
*Bru.* Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
That you would have me seek into myself
For that which is not in me?
*Cas.* Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear:
And since you know you cannot see yourself
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,
Will modestly discover to yourself
That of yourself which you yet know not of.
And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus:
Were I a common laugher, or did use
To stale with ordinary oaths my love
To every new protester; if you know
That I do fawn on men and hug them hard
And after scandal them, or if you know
That I profess myself in banqueting
To all the rout, then hold me dangerous.
[*Flourish, and shout.*

58. *shadow*, image.
69. *discover*, disclose.
71. *jealous on*, suspicious of.
72. *laugher*, jester. Rowe's emendation of Ff 'laughter.'
73. *stale*, make vulgar.
76. *scandal*, slander.
77. *profess myself*, make professions of friendship.

*Bru.* What means this shouting? I do fear, the people
Choose Cæsar for their king.
*Cas.* Ay, do you fear it?
Then must I think you would not have it so.
*Bru.* I would not, Cassius; yet I love him well.
But wherefore do you hold me here so long?
What is it that you would impart to me?
If it be aught toward the general good,
Set honour in one eye and death i' the other,
And I will look on both indifferently;
For let the gods so speed me as I love
The name of honour more than I fear death.
*Cas.* I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
As well as I do know your outward favour.
Well, honour is the subject of my story.
I cannot tell what you and other men
Think of this life; but, for my single self,
I had as lief not be as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Cæsar; so were you:
We both have fed as well, and we can both
Endure the winter's cold as well as he:
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Cæsar said to me 'Darest thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood,
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in
And bade him follow; so indeed he did.
The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts of controversy;
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
Cæsar cried 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'

91. *favour*, countenance. 110. *arrive*, reach.

I, as Æneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
Did I the tired Cæsar. And this man
Is now become a god, and Cassius is
A wretched creature and must bend his body,
If Cæsar carelessly but nod on him.
He had a fever when he was in Spain,
And when the fit was on him, I did mark
How he did shake: 'tis true, this god did shake:
His coward lips did from their colour fly,
And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world
Did lose his lustre: I did hear him groan:
Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans
Mark him and write his speeches in their books,
Alas, it cried 'Give me some drink, Titinius,'
As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world,
And bear the palm alone. [*Shout. Flourish.*
*Bru.* Another general shout!
I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honours that are heap'd on Cæsar.
*Cas.* Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates:
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,

112. *Æneas*, regarded in Roman legend as the progenitor of the Roman people. He was said to have borne his father Anchises on his shoulders from the flames of Troy (Vergil, *Æn.* ii.).

123. *bend*, look (*i.e.* the gaze bent upon a particular object).

136. *Colossus*, the Colossus of Rhodes; a huge figure of bronze traditionally said to have stood astride the entrance of the harbour.

But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
Brutus and Cæsar: what should be in that 'Cæsar'?
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?
Write them together, yours is as fair a name;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;
Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar.
Now, in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
When went there by an age, since the great flood,
But it was famed with more than with one man?
When could they say till now, that talk'd of Rome,
That her wide walls encompass'd but one man?
Now is it Rome indeed and room enough,
When there is in it but one only man.
O, you and I have heard our fathers say,
There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king.

*Bru.* That you do love me, I am nothing jealous;
What you would work me to, I have some aim:
How I have thought of this and of these times,
I shall recount hereafter; for this present,
I would not, so with love I might entreat you,
Be any further moved. What you have said
I will consider; what you have to say
I will with patience hear, and find a time

153. *famed with*, made famous by.

156. *Rome* was pronounced like 'doom,' *Lucr.* 715, and 'groom,' ib. 1644, as well as 'room' (cf. *King John*, iii. 1. 180); but these words were still probably on the way from the M.E. *ō* to the modern *ū*.

159. *a Brutus once*, Lucius Junius Brutus, who caused the expulsion of the last kings of Rome.

160. *eternal* (used as an expletive), 'infernal.'

Both meet to hear and answer such high things.
Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this:
Brutus had rather be a villager
Than to repute himself a son of Rome
Under these hard conditions as this time
Is like to lay upon us.

*Cas.* I am glad that my weak words
Have struck but thus much show of fire from Brutus.

*Bru.* The games are done and Cæsar is returning.

*Cas.* As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve;
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
What hath proceeded worthy note to-day.

*Re-enter* CÆSAR *and his Train.*

*Bru.* I will do so. But, look you, Cassius,
The angry spot doth glow on Cæsar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train:
Calpurnia's cheek is pale; and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being cross'd in conference by some senators.

*Cas.* Casca will tell us what the matter is.

*Cæs.* Antonius!

*Ant.* Cæsar?

*Cæs.* Let me have men about me that are fat:
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights:
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

*Ant.* Fear him not, Cæsar; he 's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman and well given.

*Cæs.* Would he were fatter! But I fear him not:
Yet if my name were liable to fear,

193. *Sleek-headed;* an excellent variant for North's matter-of-fact 'smooth-combed' (p. 180).

197. *well given*, well disposed.

I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men; he loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit
That could be moved to smile at any thing.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what I fear; for always I am Cæsar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

[*Sennet. Exeunt Cæsar and all his Train, but Casca.*

*Casca.* You pull'd me by the cloak; would you speak with me?

*Bru.* Ay, Casca; tell us what hath chanced to-day,
That Cæsar looks so sad.

*Casca.* Why, you were with him, were you not?

*Bru.* I should not then ask Casca what had chanced.

*Casca.* Why, there was a crown offered him: and being offered him, he put it by with the back of his hand, thus; and then the people fell a-shouting.

*Bru.* What was the second noise for?

*Casca.* Why, for that too.

*Cas.* They shouted thrice: what was the last cry for?

*Casca.* Why, for that too.

*Bru.* Was the crown offered him thrice?

226. *They shouted thrice;* in Plutarch the offer was made twice.

*Casca.* Ay, marry, was't, and he put it by thrice, every time gentler than other, and at every putting-by mine honest neighbours shouted.

*Cas.* Who offered him the crown?

*Casca.* Why, Antony.

*Bru.* Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca.

*Casca.* I can as well be hanged as tell the manner of it: it was mere foolery; I did not mark it. I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown;—yet 'twas not a crown neither, 'twas one of these coronets;—and, as I told you, he put it by once: but, for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again: but, to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time; he put it the third time by: and still as he refused it, the rabblement hooted and clapped their chopped hands and threw up their sweaty night-caps and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Cæsar refused the crown that it had almost choked Cæsar; for he swounded and fell down at it: and for mine own part, I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air.

*Cas.* But, soft, I pray you: what, did Cæsar swound?

*Casca.* He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at mouth, and was speechless.

*Bru.* 'Tis very like: he hath the falling sickness.

*Cas.* No, Cæsar hath it not; but you and I
And honest Casca, we have the falling sickness.

*Casca.* I know not what you mean by that; but, I am sure, Cæsar fell down. If the tag-rag people did not clap him and hiss him, according

245. *hooted*, shouted with joy.
246. *chopped*, chapped.
256. *falling sickness*, epilepsy.

as he pleased and displeased them, as they use to do the players in the theatre, I am no true man.

*Bru.* What said he when he came unto himself?

*Casca.* Marry, before he fell down, when he perceived the common herd was glad he refused the crown, he plucked me ope his doublet and offered them his throat to cut. An I had been a man of any occupation, if I would not have taken him at a word, I would I might go to hell among the rogues. And so he fell. When he came to himself again, he said, If he had done or said any thing amiss, he desired their worships to think it was his infirmity. Three or four wenches, where I stood, cried 'Alas, good soul!' and forgave him with all their hearts: but there's no heed to be taken of them; if Cæsar had stabbed their mothers, they would have done no less.

*Bru.* And after that, he came, thus sad, away?

*Casca.* Ay.

*Cas.* Did Cicero say any thing?

*Casca.* Ay, he spoke Greek.

*Cas.* To what effect?

*Casca.* Nay, an I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i' the face again: but those that understood him smiled at one another and shook their heads; but, for mine own part, it was Greek to me. I could tell you more news too: Marullus and Flavius, for pulling scarfs off Cæsar's images, are put to silence. Fare you well. There was more foolery yet, if I could remember it.

*Cas.* Will you sup with me to-night, Casca?

*Casca.* No, I am promised forth.

*Cas.* Will you dine with me to-morrow?

*Casca.* Ay, if I be alive and your mind hold and your dinner worth the eating.

268. *a man of any occupation*, of any trade; a mechanic.

*Cas.* Good: I will expect you.
*Casca.* Do so. Farewell, both. [*Exit.*
*Bru.* What a blunt fellow is this grown to be!
He was quick mettle when he went to school.
*Cas.* So is he now in execution
Of any bold or noble enterprise,
However he puts on this tardy form.
This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,
Which gives men stomach to digest his words
With better appetite.
*Bru.* And so it is. For this time I will leave you:
To-morrow, if you please to speak with me,
I will come home to you; or, if you will,
Come home to me, and I will wait for you.
*Cas.* I will do so: till then, think of the world.
[*Exit Brutus.*
Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see,
Thy honourable metal may be wrought
From that it is disposed: therefore it is meet
That noble minds keep ever with their likes;
For who so firm that cannot be seduced?
Cæsar doth bear me hard; but he loves Brutus:
If I were Brutus now and he were Cassius,
He should not humour me. I will this night,
In several hands, in at his windows throw,
As if they came from several citizens,
Writings all tending to the great opinion
That Rome holds of his name; wherein obscurely
Cæsar's ambition shall be glanced at:
And after this let Cæsar seat him sure;
For we will shake him, or worse days endure.
[*Exit.*

303. *tardy form*, boorish manner.
317. *bear me hard*, bear a grudge against me.
319. *He should not humour me*, Brutus should not work upon me, as I have done upon him. Others understand 'he' of Cæsar. But this is foreign to the context.

## Scene III. *The same. A street.*

*Thunder and lightning. Enter, from opposite sides,* Casca, *with his sword drawn, and* Cicero.

*Cic.* Good even, Casca: brought you Cæsar home?
Why are you breathless? and why stare you so?
*Casca.* Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam,
To be exalted with the threatening clouds:
But never till to-night, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
Incenses them to send destruction.
*Cic.* Why, saw you any thing more wonderful?
*Casca.* A common slave—you know him well by sight—
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
Like twenty torches join'd, and yet his hand,
Not sensible of fire, remain'd unscorch'd.
Besides—I ha' not since put up my sword—
Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glared upon me, and went surly by,

3. *sway*, controlled and regular order. The notion of 'balanced swing,' or the like, more obvious to us, is not supported by Shakespeare's use of the word.

18. *Not sensible of*, insensible to.

21. *glared;* Rowe's emendation for Ff 'glazed.' The Camb. edd. retain this, but Shakespeare always elsewhere uses 'glare' and 'glaze' in their perfectly distinct modern senses; and 'glaze' has not been adduced in any other.

Without annoying me: and there were drawn
Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women,
Transformed with their fear; who swore they saw
Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.
And yesterday the bird of night did sit
Even at noon-day upon the market-place,
Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say
'These are their reasons; they are natural;'
For, I believe, they are portentous things
Unto the climate that they point upon.

*Cic.* Indeed, it is a strange-disposed time:
But men may construe things after their fashion,
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.
Comes Cæsar to the Capitol to-morrow?

*Casca.* He doth; for he did bid Antonius
Send word to you he would be there to-morrow.

*Cic.* Good night then, Casca: this disturbed sky
Is not to walk in.

*Casca.* Farewell, Cicero. [*Exit Cicero.*

*Enter* CASSIUS.

*Cas.* Who 's there?

*Casca.* A Roman.

*Cas.* Casca, by your voice.

*Casca.* Your ear is good. Cassius, what night is this!

*Cas.* A very pleasing night to honest men.

*Casca.* Who ever knew the heavens menace so?

*Cas.* Those that have known the earth so full of faults.

22. *drawn*, huddled.
23. *Upon a heap*, into a throng.
32. *climate*, region.
34. *after their fashion*, according to their individual bias.
35. *from*, away from, contrary to.
42. *what night*, what a night.

For my part, I have walk'd about the streets,
Submitting me unto the perilous night,
And, thus unbraced, Casca, as you see,
Have bared my bosom to the thunder-stone;
And when the cross blue lightning seem'd to open
The breast of heaven, I did present myself
Even in the aim and very flash of it.

*Casca.* But wherefore did you so much tempt the heavens?
It is the part of men to fear and tremble,
When the most mighty gods by tokens send
Such dreadful heralds to astonish us.

*Cas.* You are dull, Casca, and those sparks of life
That should be in a Roman you do want,
Or else you use not. You look pale and gaze
And put on fear and cast yourself in wonder,
To see the strange impatience of the heavens:
But if you would consider the true cause
Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,
Why birds and beasts from quality and kind,
Why old men fool and children calculate,
Why all these things change from their ordinance
Their natures and preformed faculties
To monstrous quality,—why, you shall find
That heaven hath infused them with these spirits,
To make them instruments of fear and warning
Unto some monstrous state.
Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man

48. *unbraced*, with doublet open. Elizabethan dress is assumed throughout. Cf. i. 2. 267.

50. *cross*, forked.

56. *astonish*, stun with terror.

60. *cast yourself in wonder*, throw yourself into a state of wonder. Casca's fear and wonder are in so far voluntary as he might avoid them 'if he would consider the true case' of the marvels.

64. *from;* cf. v. 35.

ib. *kind*, nature.

65. *fool*, act like fools, lose their heads; Mitford's probable emendation of Ff 'fooles.'

65. *calculate*, prognosticate.

67. *preformed*, original.

Most like this dreadful night,
That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars
As doth the lion in the Capitol,
A man no mightier than thyself or me
In personal action, yet prodigious grown
And fearful, as these strange eruptions are.

*Casca.* 'Tis Cæsar that you mean; is it not, Cassius?

*Cas.* Let it be who it is: for Romans now
Have thews and limbs like to their ancestors;
But, woe the while! our fathers' minds are dead,
And we are govern'd with our mothers' spirits;
Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish.

*Casca.* Indeed, they say the senators to-morrow
Mean to establish Cæsar as a king;
And he shall wear his crown by sea and land,
In every place, save here in Italy.

*Cas.* I know where I will wear this dagger then;
Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius:
Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong;
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat:
Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit;
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.
If I know this, know all the world besides,
That part of tyranny that I do bear
I can shake off at pleasure. [*Thunder still.*

*Casca.* So can I:
So every bondman in his own hand bears
The power to cancel his captivity.

*Cas.* And why should Cæsar be a tyrant then?
Poor man! I know he would not be a wolf,

77. *prodigious*, portentous.
101. *bondman* (with a play on 'bond').

But that he sees the Romans are but sheep:
He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.
Those that with haste will make a mighty fire
Begin it with weak straws: what trash is Rome,
What rubbish and what offal, when it serves
For the base matter to illuminate
So vile a thing as Cæsar! But, O grief,
Where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this
Before a willing bondman; then I know
My answer must be made. But I am arm'd,
And dangers are to me indifferent.

*Casca.* You speak to Casca, and to such a man
That is no fleering tell-tale. Hold, my hand:
Be factious for redress of all these griefs,
And I will set this foot of mine as far
As who goes farthest.

*Cas.* There 's a bargain made.
Now know you, Casca, I have moved already
Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans
To undergo with me an enterprise
Of honourable-dangerous consequence;
And I do know, by this, they stay for me
In Pompey's porch: for now, this fearful night,
There is no stir or walking in the streets;
And the complexion of the element
In favour 's like the work we have in hand,

114. *My answer must be made*, I shall be called to account.

117. *fleering*, grinning.

118. *Be factious*, agitate.

ib. *griefs*, grievances.

121. *moved*, proposed to.

123. *undergo*, undertake.

126. *Pompey's porch*, 'one of the porches about the theatre [of Pompey], in which there was a certain place full of seats for men to sit in; where also was set up the image of Pompey' (North). This porch was the actual scene of the assassination, which Shakespeare places on the Capitol; and the 'image' is that which he nevertheless makes Cæsar's body stain with blood (iii. 2. 192).

128. *element*, air.

129. *favour*, aspect.

Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.
*Casca.* Stand close awhile, for here comes one in haste.
*Cas.* 'Tis Cinna; I do know him by his gait;
He is a friend.

*Enter* CINNA

Cinna, where haste you so?
*Cin.* To find out you. Who's that? Metellus Cimber?
*Cas.* No, it is Casca; one incorporate
To our attempts. Am I not stay'd for, Cinna?
*Cin.* I am glad on 't. What a fearful night is this!
There 's two or three of us have seen strange sights.
*Cas.* Am I not stay'd for? tell me.
*Cin.* Yes, you are.
O Cassius, if you could
But win the noble Brutus to our party—
*Cas.* Be you content: good Cinna, take this paper,
And look you lay it in the prætor's chair,
Where Brutus may but find it; and throw this
In at his window; set this up with wax
Upon old Brutus' statue: all this done,
Repair to Pompey's porch, where you shall find us.
Is Decius Brutus and Trebonius there?
*Cin.* All but Metellus Cimber; and he 's gone
To seek you at your house. Well, I will hie,
And so bestow these papers as you bade me.

144. *Where Brutus may but find it*, where Brutus alone may find it.

146. *old Brutus'*, i.e. Lucius Junius Brutus. Plutarch records that 'the ancient Romans made his statue of brass to be set up in the Capitol, with the images of the kings, holding a naked sword in his hand because he had valiantly put down the Tarquins from the kingdom of Rome.'

148. *Decius Brutus*, the Decimus Brutus of history. The blunder was Amyot's; thence it passed to his English translator North, Shakespeare's authority.

*Cas.* That done, repair to Pompey's theatre.
[*Exit Cinna.*
Come, Casca, you and I will yet ere day
See Brutus at his house: three parts of him
Is ours already, and the man entire
Upon the next encounter yields him ours.
*Casca.* O, he sits high in all the people's hearts:
And that which would appear offence in us,
His countenance, like richest alchemy,
Will change to virtue and to worthiness.
*Cas.* Him and his worth and our great need of him
You have right well conceited. Let us go,
For it is after midnight; and ere day
We will awake him and be sure of him. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I. *Rome. Brutus's orchard.*

*Enter* BRUTUS.

*Bru.* What, Lucius, ho!
I cannot, by the progress of the stars,
Give guess how near to day. Lucius, I say!
I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly.
When, Lucius, when? awake, I say! what, Lucius!

*Enter* LUCIUS.

*Luc.* Call'd you, my lord?
*Bru.* Get me a taper in my study, Lucius:
When it is lighted, come and call me here.
*Luc.* I will, my lord. [*Exit.*

162. *conceited*, conceived.

*Bru.* It must be by his death: and for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crown'd:
How that might change his nature, there's the question.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
And that craves wary walking. Crown him?—that;—
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.
The abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins
Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof,
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend. So Cæsar may.
Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel
Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities:
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.

*Re-enter* LUCIUS.

*Luc.* The taper burneth in your closet, sir.
Searching the window for a flint, I found

12. *the general*, the community at large.
19. *Remorse*, considerateness prompted by feeling.
21. *proof*, experience.

This paper, thus seal'd up; and, I am sure,
It did not lie there when I went to bed.
[*Gives him the letter.*
*Bru.* Get you to bed again; it is not day.
Is not to-morrow, boy, the ides of March?
*Luc.* I know not, sir.
*Bru.* Look in the calendar, and bring me word.
*Luc.* I will, sir. [*Exit.*
*Bru.* The exhalations whizzing in the air
Give so much light that I may read by them.
[*Opens the letter and reads.*
'Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake, and see thyself.
Shall Rome, etc. Speak, strike, redress!
Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake!'
Such instigations have been often dropp'd
Where I have took them up.
'Shall Rome, etc.' Thus must I piece it out:
Shall Rome stand under one man's awe? What, Rome?
My ancestors did from the streets of Rome
The Tarquin drive, when he was call'd a king.
'Speak, strike, redress!' Am I entreated
To speak and strike? O Rome, I make thee promise:
If the redress will follow, thou receivest
Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus!

40. *ides.* Theobald's correction of Ff 'first.' It is possible that Shakespeare may casually have written 'first,' the first of March having been originally fixed for the Senate meeting. He read in Plutarch that 'Cassius asked (Brutus) if he were determined to be in the Senate-house the 1st day of the month of March, because he heard say that Cæsar's friends should move the council that day that Cæsar should be called king.' But it is clear from i. 2. 19, that Brutus is meant here to be struck with the fulfilment of the soothsayer's prophecy.

44. *exhalations*, meteors.

*Re-enter* LUCIUS.

*Luc.* Sir, March is wasted fifteen days.

[*Knocking within.*

*Bru.* 'Tis good. Go to the gate; somebody knocks. [*Exit Lucius.*

Since Cassius first did whet me against Cæsar,
I have not slept.
Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
The Genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council; and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.

*Re-enter* LUCIUS.

*Luc.* Sir, 'tis your brother Cassius at the door,
Who doth desire to see you.

*Bru.* Is he alone?

*Luc.* No, sir, there are moe with him.

*Bru.* Do you know them?

*Luc.* No, sir; their hats are pluck'd about their ears,
And half their faces buried in their cloaks,

59. *fifteen;* so Ff. Warburton (followed by many modern edd.) wrongly altered to 'fourteen.' It is, in fact, the dawn of the fifteenth, which Lucius may be supposed to include.

64. *motion*, prompting.

65. *a phantasma*, an illusory vision.

66. *The Genius and the mortal instruments*, the rational spirit possessing a man, and his passions and desires. The 'mortal instruments' are the bodily organs through or in league with which the soul acts: the brain, with which it generates thoughts (cf. *Richard II.* v. 5. 6 f.); the heart, which was the source of feeling perhaps; the liver, the seat of fear, gloom, wrath, and love. The 'genius' is never in Shakespeare expressly identified with the man, but its meaning here comes near to that of soul.

70. *brother Cassius.* Cassius had married Brutus' sister.

That by no means I may discover them
By any mark of favour.
*Bru.* Let 'em enter. [*Exit Lucius.*
They are the faction. O conspiracy,
Shamest thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
When evils are most free? O, then by day
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, conspiracy;
Hide it in smiles and affability:
For if thou path, thy native semblance on,
Not Erebus itself were dim enough
To hide thee from prevention.

*Enter the conspirators*, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS, CINNA, METELLUS CIMBER, *and* TREBONIUS.

*Cas.* I think we are too bold upon your rest:
Good morrow, Brutus; do we trouble you?
*Bru.* I have been up this hour, awake all night.
Know I these men that come along with you?
*Cas.* Yes, every man of them, and no man here
But honours you; and every one doth wish
You had but that opinion of yourself
Which every noble Roman bears of you.
This is Trebonius.
*Bru.* He is welcome hither.
*Cas.* This, Decius Brutus.
*Bru.* He is welcome too.
*Cas.* This, Casca; this, Cinna; and this, Metellus Cimber.
*Bru.* They are all welcome.

76. *favour*, countenance.
77. *the faction*, the body of conspirators.
83. *path*, take thy way.
84. *Erebus*, a region of thick darkness between Earth and Hades.

What watchful cares do interpose themselves
Betwixt your eyes and night?
*Cas.* Shall I entreat a word?
[*Brutus and Cassius whisper.*
*Dec.* Here lies the east: doth not the day break here?
*Casca.* No.
*Cin.* O, pardon, sir, it doth; and yon gray lines
That fret the clouds are messengers of day.
*Casca.* You shall confess that you are both deceived.
Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises,
Which is a great way growing on the south,
Weighing the youthful season of the year.
Some two months hence up higher toward the north
He first presents his fire; and the high east
Stands, as the Capitol, directly here.
*Bru.* Give me your hands all over, one by one.
*Cas.* And let us swear our resolution.
*Bru.* No, not an oath: if not the face of men,
The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse,—
If these be motives weak, break off betimes,
And every man hence to his idle bed;
So let high-sighted tyranny range on,
Till each man drop by lottery. But if these,
As I am sure they do, bear fire enough
To kindle cowards and to steel with valour
The melting spirits of women, then, countrymen,
What need we any spur but our own cause,

104. *fret*, fleck, as with ripples of light.
107. *growing on*, advancing towards.
112. *all over*, one after the other.
114. *the face of men*, the sense of peril legible in every countenance.
115. *the time's abuse*, the grievous plight of the age.
117. *idle bed*, bed of idleness.
118. *high-sighted*, haughtily supercilious.
118. *range*, roam.

To prick us to redress? what other bond
Than secret Romans, that have spoke the word,
And will not palter? and what other oath
Than honesty to honesty engaged,
That this shall be, or we will fall for it?
Swear priests and cowards and men cautelous,
Old feeble carrions and such suffering souls
That welcome wrongs; unto bad causes swear
Such creatures as men doubt; but do not stain
The even virtue of our enterprise,
Nor the insuppressive mettle of our spirits,
To think that or our cause or our performance
Did need an oath; when every drop of blood
That every Roman bears, and nobly bears,
Is guilty of a several bastardy,
If he do break the smallest particle
Of any promise that hath pass'd from him.

*Cas.* But what of Cicero? shall we sound him?
I think he will stand very strong with us.

*Casca.* Let us not leave him out.

*Cin.* No, by no means.

*Met.* O, let us have him, for his silver hairs
Will purchase us a good opinion
And buy men's voices to commend our deeds:
It shall be said, his judgement ruled our hands
Our youths and wildness shall no whit appear,
But all be buried in his gravity.

*Bru.* O, name him not: let us not break with him;
For he will never follow any thing
That other men begin.

*Cas.* Then leave him out.

*Casca.* Indeed he is not fit.

129. *cautelous*, crafty.
133. *even*, pure.
134. *insuppressive*, insuppressible.
138. *several*, separate, distinct.
150. *break with*, break the matter to.

*Dec.* Shall no man else be touch'd but only Cæsar?
*Cas.* Decius, well urged: I think it is not meet,
Mark Antony, so well beloved of Cæsar,
Should outlive Cæsar: we shall find of him
A shrewd contriver; and, you know, his means,
If he improve them, may well stretch so far
As to annoy us all: which to prevent,
Let Antony and Cæsar fall together.
*Bru.* Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
To cut the head off and then hack the limbs,
Like wrath in death and envy afterwards;
For Antony is but a limb of Cæsar:
Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.
We all stand up against the spirit of Cæsar;
And in the spirit of men there is no blood:
O, that we then could come by Cæsar's spirit,
And not dismember Cæsar! But, alas,
Cæsar must bleed for it! And, gentle friends,
Let 's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;
Let 's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds:
And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,
Stir up their servants to an act of rage,
And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make
Our purpose necessary and not envious:
Which so appearing to the common eyes,
We shall be call'd purgers, not murderers.
And for Mark Antony, think not of him;
For he can do no more than Cæsar's arm
When Cæsar's head is off.
*Cas.* Yet I fear him;
For in the ingrafted love he bears to Cæsar—
*Bru.* Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him:

158. *shrewd*, dangerous. 160. *annoy*, harm.
178. *envious*, malicious.

If he love Cæsar, all that he can do
Is to himself, take thought and die for Cæsar:
And that were much he should, for he is given
To sports, to wildness and much company.
*Treb.* There is no fear in him: let him not die;
For he will live, and laugh at this hereafter.
[*Clock strikes.*
*Bru.* Peace! count the clock.
*Cas.* The clock hath stricken three.
*Treb.* 'Tis time to part.
*Cas.* But it is doubtful yet
Whether Cæsar will come forth to-day or no;
For he is superstitious grown of late,
Quite from the main opinion he held once
Of fantasy, of dreams and ceremonies:
It may be, these apparent prodigies,
The unaccustom'd terror of this night,
And the persuasion of his augurers,
May hold him from the Capitol to-day.
*Dec.* Never fear that: if he be so resolved,
I can o'ersway him; for he loves to hear
That unicorns may be betray'd with trees,
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,

187. *take thought*, fall to melancholy (cf. modern 'take on').

188. *And that were much he should*, and that for him were much.

194. *Whether* (pronounced 'where').

196. *from the main opinion*, contrary to the dominant (*i.e.* assured) opinion.

197. *ceremonies* (any thing or observance held sacred; hence, here), signs, portents.

198. *apparent*, evident.

200. *augurers*, official diviners.

204. *unicorns may be betray'd with trees.* The classical procedure of the Lion when charged by the Unicorn was to stand against a tree and then slip aside so that his enemy plunged his horn into the trunk and was securely held fast.

205. *bears* were said to be taken by displaying mirrors which beguiled them with their own images.

205. *elephants* 'were seduced into pitfalls, lightly covered over with hurdles and turf, on which a proper bait to tempt them was exposed' (Steevens).

Lions with toils, and men with flatterers:
But when I tell him he hates flatterers,
He says he does, being then most flattered.
Let me work;
For I can give his humour the true bent,
And I will bring him to the Capitol.

*Cas.* Nay, we will all of us be there to fetch him.

*Bru.* By the eighth hour: is that the uttermost?

*Cin.* Be that the uttermost, and fail not then.

*Met.* Caius Ligarius doth bear Cæsar hard,
Who rated him for speaking well of Pompey:
I wonder none of you have thought of him.

*Bru.* Now, good Metellus, go along by him:
He loves me well, and I have given him reasons;
Send him but hither, and I'll fashion him.

*Cas.* The morning comes upon 's: we'll leave you, Brutus.
And, friends, disperse yourselves; but all remember
What you have said, and show yourselves true Romans.

*Bru.* Good gentlemen, look fresh and merrily;
Let not our looks put on our purposes,
But bear it as our Roman actors do,
With untired spirits and formal constancy:
And so good morrow to you every one.

[*Exeunt all but Brutus.*

Boy! Lucius! Fast asleep? It is no matter;
Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber:
Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,
Which busy care draws in the brains of men;
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

*Enter* PORTIA.

*Por.* Brutus, my lord!

212. *fetch*, escort.
227. *formal*, grave, dignified.
230. *honey-heavy*, heavy with honey, steeped in sweetness.
231. *figures*, idle but disquieting images.

*Bru.* Portia, what mean you? wherefore rise you now?
It is not for your health thus to commit
Your weak condition to the raw cold morning.
*Por.* Nor for yours neither. You 've ungently, Brutus,
Stole from my bed: and yesternight, at supper,
You suddenly arose, and walk'd about,
Musing and sighing, with your arms across;
And when I ask'd you what the matter was,
You stared upon me with ungentle looks;
I urged you further; then you scratch'd your head,
And too impatiently stamp'd with your foot;
Yet I insisted, yet you answer'd not,
But with an angry wafture of your hand
Gave sign for me to leave you: so I did;
Fearing to strengthen that impatience
Which seem'd too much enkindled, and withal
Hoping it was but an effect of humour,
Which sometime hath his hour with every man.
It will not let you eat, nor talk, nor sleep,
And could it work so much upon your shape
As it hath much prevail'd on your condition,
I should not know you, Brutus. Dear my lord,
Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.
*Bru.* I am not well in health, and that is all.
*Por.* Brutus is wise, and, were he not in health,
He would embrace the means to come by it.
*Bru.* Why, so I do. Good Portia, go to bed.
*Por.* Is Brutus sick? and is it physical
To walk unbraced and suck up the humours
Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick,
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed,

250. *humour*, moody caprice.
254. *condition*, mental disposition.
261. *physical*, wholesome

To dare the vile contagion of the night
And tempt the rheumy and unpurged air
To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus;
You have some sick offence within your mind,
Which, by the right and virtue of my place,
I ought to know of: and, upon my knees,
I charm you, by my once-commended beauty,
By all your vows of love and that great vow
Which did incorporate and make us one,
That you unfold to me, yourself, your half,
Why you are heavy, and what men to-night
Have had resort to you: for here have been
Some six or seven, who did hide their faces
Even from darkness.

*Bru.* Kneel not, gentle Portia.

*Por.* I should not need, if you were gentle Brutus.
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it excepted I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I yourself
But, as it were, in sort or limitation,
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

*Bru.* You are my true and honourable wife,
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart.

*Por.* If this were true, then should I know this secret.
I grant I am a woman; but withal
A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife:
I grant I am a woman; but withal
A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter.
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,

268. *sick offence*, hurtful distemper. 271. *charm*, conjure.

Being so father'd and so husbanded?
Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose 'em:
I have made strong proof of my constancy,
Giving myself a voluntary wound
Here, in the thigh: can I bear that with patience,
And not my husband's secrets?
*Bru.* O ye gods,
Render me worthy of this noble wife!
[*Knocking within.*
Hark, hark! one knocks: Portia, go in awhile;
And by and by thy bosom shall partake
The secrets of my heart.
All my engagements I will construe to thee,
All the charactery of my sad brows:
Leave me with haste. [*Exit Portia.*] Lucius,
who's that knocks?

*Re-enter* LUCIUS *with* LIGARIUS.

*Luc.* Here is a sick man that would speak with you.
*Bru.* Caius Ligarius, that Metellus spake of.
Boy, stand aside. Caius Ligarius! how?
*Lig.* Vouchsafe good morrow from a feeble tongue.
*Bru.* O, what a time have you chose out, brave Caius,
To wear a kerchief! Would you were not sick!
*Lig.* I am not sick, if Brutus have in hand
Any exploit worthy the name of honour.
*Bru.* Such an exploit have I in hand, Ligarius,
Had you a healthful ear to hear of it.
*Lig.* By all the gods that Romans bow before,
I here discard my sickness! Soul of Rome!
Brave son, derived from honourable loins!
Thou, like an exorcist, hast conjured up

308. *charactery*, writing (the signs of care graven in my brow).

My mortified spirit. Now bid me run,
And I will strive with things impossible,
Yea, get the better of them. What 's to do?

*Bru.* A piece of work that will make sick men whole.

*Lig.* But are not some whole that we must make sick?

*Bru.* That must we also. What it is, my Caius,
I shall unfold to thee, as we are going
To whom it must be done.

*Lig.* Set on your foot,
And with a heart new-fired I follow you,
To do I know not what: but it sufficeth
That Brutus leads me on.

*Bru.* Follow me, then. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II. *Cæsar's house.*

*Thunder and lightning. Enter* CÆSAR, *in his night-gown.*

*Cæs.* Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace to-night:
Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out,
'Help, ho! they murder Cæsar!' Who 's within?

*Enter a* Servant.

*Serv.* My lord?

*Cæs.* Go bid the priests do present sacrifice
And bring me their opinions of success.

*Serv.* I will, my lord. [*Exit.*

*Enter* CALPURNIA.

*Cal.* What mean you, Cæsar? think you to walk forth?

*Sc. 2. night-gown*, dressing-gown.

You shall not stir out of your house to-day.

*Cæs.* Cæsar shall forth: the things that threaten'd me

Ne'er look'd but on my back; when they shall see
The face of Cæsar, they are vanished.

*Cal.* Cæsar, I never stood on ceremonies,
Yet now they fright me. There is one within,
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
A lioness hath whelped in the streets;
And graves have yawn'd, and yielded up their dead;
Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;
The noise of battle hurtled in the air,
Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan,
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.
O Cæsar! these things are beyond all use,
And I do fear them.

*Cæs.* What can be avoided
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?
Yet Cæsar shall go forth; for these predictions
Are to the world in general as to Cæsar.

*Cal.* When beggars die, there are no comets seen;

The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

*Cæs.* Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

13. *ceremonies;* cf. ii. 1. 197.

24. *squeal;* in Shakespeare's time still a dignified word.

*Re-enter* Servant.

What say the augurers?

*Serv.* They would not have you to stir forth to-day.
Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,
They could not find a heart within the beast.

*Cæs.* The gods do this in shame of cowardice:
Cæsar should be a beast without a heart,
If he should stay at home to-day for fear.
No, Cæsar shall not: danger knows full well
That Cæsar is more dangerous than he:
We are two lions litter'd in one day,
And I the elder and more terrible:
And Cæsar shall go forth.

*Cal.* Alas, my lord,
Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.
Do not go forth to-day: call it my fear
That keeps you in the house, and not your own.
We 'll send Mark Antony to the senate-house;
And he shall say you are not well to-day:
Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.

*Cæs.* Mark Antony shall say I am not well;
And, for thy humour, I will stay at home.

*Enter* Decius.

Here 's Decius Brutus, he shall tell them so.

*Dec.* Cæsar, all hail! good morrow, worthy Cæsar:
I come to fetch you to the senate-house.

*Cæs.* And you are come in very happy time,
To bear my greeting to the senators
And tell them that I will not come to-day:
Cannot, is false, and that I dare not, falser:
I will not come to-day: tell them so, Decius.

46. *are;* Upton's correction of Ff 'hear(e).'

*Cal.* Say he is sick.
*Cæs.* Shall Cæsar send a lie?
Have I in conquest stretch'd mine arm so far,
To be afeard to tell graybeards the truth?
Decius, go tell them Cæsar will not come.
*Dec.* Most mighty Cæsar, let me know some cause,
Lest I be laugh'd at when I tell them so.
*Cæs.* The cause is in my will: I will not come;
That is enough to satisfy the senate.
But for your private satisfaction,
Because I love you, I will let you know:
Calpurnia here, my wife, stays me at home:
She dreamt to-night she saw my statuë,
Which like a fountain with an hundred spouts
Did run pure blood, and many lusty Romans
Came smiling, and did bathe their hands in it:
And these does she apply for warnings and portents
And evils imminent; and on her knee
Hath begg'd that I will stay at home to-day.
*Dec.* This dream is all amiss interpreted;
It was a vision fair and fortunate:
Your statue spouting blood in many pipes,
In which so many smiling Romans bathed,
Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck
Reviving blood, and that great men shall press
For tinctures, stains, relics and cognizance.
This by Calpurnia's dream is signified.
*Cæs.* And this way have you well expounded it.
*Dec.* I have, when you have heard what I can say:

87. *great men shall press for tinctures*, i.e. for blood-stained mementoes; an allusion to the practice of dipping napkins in the blood of martyrs. The hurry of improvisation, or, as Craik suggests, 'an unseen power driving on both the unconscious prophet and the blinded victim,' betrays Decius into an 'interpretation' perilously near the truth. Cæsar's comment is not, as has been thought, ironical.

89. *cognizance*, tokens.

And know it now: the senate have concluded
To give this day a crown to mighty Cæsar.
If you shall send them word you will not come,
Their minds may change. Besides, it were a mock
Apt to be render'd, for some one to say
'Break up the senate till another time,
When Cæsar's wife shall meet with better dreams.'
If Cæsar hide himself, shall they not whisper
'Lo, Cæsar is afraid'?
Pardon me, Cæsar; for my dear dear love
To your proceeding bids me tell you this;
And reason to my love is liable.

*Cæs.* How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia!
I am ashamed I did yield to them.
Give me my robe, for I will go.

*Enter* PUBLIUS, BRUTUS, LIGARIUS, METELLUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS, *and* CINNA.

And look where Publius is come to fetch me.

*Pub.* Good morrow, Cæsar.

*Cæs.* Welcome, Publius.
What, Brutus, are you stirr'd so early too?
Good morrow, Casca. Caius Ligarius,
Cæsar was ne'er so much your enemy
As that same ague which hath made you lean.
What is 't o'clock?

*Bru.* Cæsar, 'tis strucken eight.

*Cæs.* I thank you for your pains and courtesy.

*Enter* ANTONY.

See! Antony, that revels long o' nights,
Is notwithstanding up. Good morrow, Antony.

*Ant.* So to most noble Cæsar.

96. *a mock apt to be render'd,* an obvious sarcastic rejoinder, one likely to be given in answer; 104. *liable,* subject.

*Cæs.* Bid them prepare within:
I am to blame to be thus waited for.
Now, Cinna: now, Metellus: what, Trebonius!
I have an hour's talk in store for you;
Remember that you call on me to-day:
Be near me, that I may remember you.
*Treb.* Cæsar, I will: [*Aside*] and so near will I be,
That your best friends shall wish I had been further.
*Cæs.* Good friends, go in, and taste some wine with me;
And we, like friends, will straightway go together.
*Bru.* [*Aside*] That every like is not the same, O Cæsar,
The heart of Brutus yearns to think upon!
[*Exeunt.*

## Scene III. *A street near the Capitol.*

*Enter* Artemidorus, *reading a paper.*

*Art.* 'Cæsar, beware of Brutus; take heed of Cassius; come not near Casca; have an eye to Cinna; trust not Trebonius; mark well Metellus Cimber: Decius Brutus loves thee not: thou hast wronged Caius Ligarius. There is but one mind in all these men, and it is bent against Cæsar. If thou beest not immortal, look about you: security gives way to conspiracy. The mighty gods defend thee! Thy lover,
'Artemidorus.'
Here will I stand till Cæsar pass along,
And as a suitor will I give him this.
My heart laments that virtue cannot live
Out of the teeth of emulation.
If thou read this, O Cæsar, thou mayst live;
If not, the Fates with traitors do contrive. [*Exit.*

8. *gives way to*, opens a way for.

SCENE IV. *Another part of the same street, before the house of Brutus.*

*Enter* PORTIA *and* LUCIUS.

*Por.* I prithee, boy, run to the senate-house;
Stay not to answer me, but get thee gone:
Why dost thou stay?
*Luc.* To know my errand, madam.
*Por.* I would have had thee there, and here again,
Ere I can tell thee what thou shouldst do there.
O constancy, be strong upon my side,
Set a huge mountain 'tween my heart and tongue!
I have a man's mind, but a woman's might.
How hard it is for women to keep counsel!
Art thou here yet?
*Luc.* Madam, what should I do? 10
Run to the Capitol, and nothing else?
And so return to you, and nothing else?
*Por.* Yes, bring me word, boy, if thy lord look well,
For he went sickly forth: and take good note
What Cæsar doth, what suitors press to him.
Hark, boy! what noise is that?
*Luc.* I hear none, madam.
*Por.* Prithee, listen well;
I heard a bustling rumour, like a fray,
And the wind brings it from the Capitol.
*Luc.* Sooth, madam, I hear nothing. 20

*Enter the* Soothsayer.

*Por.* Come hither, fellow: which way hast thou been?

6. *constancy*, firmness.
18. *a bustling rumour*, a sound of tumult.

*Sooth.* At mine own house, good lady.

*Por.* What is 't o'clock?

*Sooth.* About the ninth hour, lady.

*Por.* Is Cæsar yet gone to the Capitol?

*Sooth.* Madam, not yet: I go to take my stand,
To see him pass on to the Capitol.

*Por.* Thou hast some suit to Cæsar, hast thou not?

*Sooth.* That I have, lady: if it will please Cæsar
To be so good to Cæsar as to hear me,
I shall beseech him to befriend himself.

*Por.* Why, know'st thou any harm 's intended towards him?

*Sooth.* None that I know will be, much that I fear may chance.
Good morrow to you. Here the street is narrow:
The throng that follows Cæsar at the heels,
Of senators, of prætors, common suitors,
Will crowd a feeble man almost to death:
I 'll get me to a place more void, and there
Speak to great Cæsar as he comes along. [*Exit.*

*Por.* I must go in. Ay me, how weak a thing
The heart of woman is! O Brutus,
The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise!
Sure, the boy heard me: Brutus hath a suit
That Cæsar will not grant. O, I grow faint.
Run, Lucius, and commend me to my lord;
Say I am merry: come to me again,
And bring me word what he doth say to thee.
[*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I. *Rome. Before the Capitol; the Senate sitting above.*

*A crowd of people; among them* ARTEMIDORUS *and the* Soothsayer. *Flourish. Enter* CÆSAR, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS, METELLUS, TREBONIUS, CINNA, ANTONY LEPIDUS, POPILIUS, PUBLIUS, *and others.*

*Cæs.* The ides of March are come.
*Sooth.* Ay, Cæsar; but not gone.
*Art.* Hail, Cæsar! read this schedule.
*Dec.* Trebonius doth desire you to o'er-read,
At your best leisure, this his humble suit.
*Art.* O Cæsar, read mine first; for mine's a suit
That touches Cæsar nearer: read it, great Cæsar.
*Cæs.* What touches us ourself shall be last served.
*Art.* Delay not, Cæsar; read it instantly.
*Cæs.* What, is the fellow mad?
*Pub.* Sirrah, give place.
*Cas.* What, urge you your petitions in the street?
Come to the Capitol.

[CÆSAR *goes up to the Senate-House, the rest following.*

1. In Plutarch these words form a private colloquy between Cæsar and the soothsayer: Cæsar addresses him 'merrily,' and he 'softly' answers. Shakespeare's Cæsar does not unbend so far.

8. *ourself.* Shakespeare gives Cæsar the plural of modern royalty, unknown even to the emperors of Rome.

*Pop.* I wish your enterprise to-day may thrive.
*Cas.* What enterprise, Popilius?
*Pop.* Fare you well.
[*Advances to Cæsar.*
*Bru.* What said Popilius Lena?
*Cas.* He wish'd to-day our enterprise might thrive.
I fear our purpose is discovered.
*Bru.* Look, how he makes to Cæsar: mark him.
*Cas.* Casca,
Be sudden, for we fear prevention.
Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known,
Cassius or Cæsar never shall turn back,
For I will slay myself.
*Bru.* Cassius, be constant:
Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;
For, look, he smiles, and Cæsar doth not change.
*Cas.* Trebonius knows his time; for, look you, Brutus,
He draws Mark Antony out of the way.
[*Exeunt Antony and Trebonius.*
*Dec.* Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him go,
And presently prefer his suit to Cæsar.
*Bru.* He is address'd: press near and second him.
*Cin.* Casca, you are the first that rears your hand.
*Cæs.* Are we all ready? What is now amiss
That Cæsar and his senate must redress?
*Met.* Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Cæsar,
Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat
An humble heart,— [*Kneeling.*
*Cæs.* I must prevent thee, Cimber.
These couchings and these lowly courtesies

22. *constant*, firm. 29. *address'd*, ready.
36. *courtesies*, kneelings.

Might fire the blood of ordinary men,
And turn pre-ordinance and first decree
Into the law of children. Be not fond,
To think that Cæsar bears such rebel blood
That will be thaw'd from the true quality
With that which melteth fools, I mean, sweet words,
Low-crooked court'sies and base spaniel-fawning.
Thy brother by decree is banished:
If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him,
I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.
Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause
Will he be satisfied.

*Met.* Is there no voice more worthy than my own,
To sound more sweetly in great Cæsar's ear
For the repealing of my banish'd brother?

*Bru.* I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Cæsar;
Desiring thee that Publius Cimber may

38. *first decree*, what has been already decreed once for all.

39. *law;* Johnson's correction of Ff 'lane.'

47. *Know, Cæsar doth not wrong*, etc. It is probable that, as first written and performed, this passage ran:—

Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause,
Nor without cause will he be satisfied.

In this form it is quoted by Jonson in a well-known criticism of Shakespeare (*Discoveries*, § 71): 'His wit was in his own power, would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things could not escape laughter: as when he said in the person of Cæsar, one speaking to him, "Cæsar, thou dost me wrong," he replied, "Cæsar *did never wrong, but with just cause*," and such like; which were ridiculous.' Jonson was an exact man, and is not at all likely to have misquoted; while the speech, paradoxical merely on the surface as it is (since 'wrong' could mean 'injury'), is by no means one that cannot have escaped from Shakespeare's pen. The reading of the Folio text was thus not improbably due to Jonson's criticism. Whether Shakespeare or some reviser made the change we cannot determine; certainly we have no right, with some editors, to decide that he did not, or to restore to the text the reading which Jonson ridicules.

51. *repealing*, recalling.

Have an immediate freedom of repeal.

*Cæs.* What, Brutus!

*Cas.* Pardon, Cæsar; Cæsar, pardon:
As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall,
To beg enfranchisement for Publius Cimber.

*Cæs.* I could be well moved, if I were as you;
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me:
But I am constant as the northern star,
Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.
The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks,
They are all fire and every one doth shine,
But there's but one in all doth hold his place:
So in the world; 'tis furnish'd well with men,
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;
Yet in the number I do know but one
That unassailable holds on his rank,
Unshaked of motion: and that I am he,
Let me a little show it, even in this:
That I was constant Cimber should be banish'd,
And constant do remain to keep him so.

*Cin.* O Cæsar,—

*Cæs.* Hence! wilt thou lift up Olympus?

*Dec.* Great Cæsar,—

*Cæs.* Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?

*Casca.* Speak, hands, for me!

[*Casca first, then the other Conspirators and Marcus Brutus stab Cæsar.*

54. *freedom of repeal*, free recall.

61. *resting*, stable.

67. *apprehensive*, endowed with understanding.

69. *holds on his rank*, stands firm in his determined place.

70. *Unshaked of motion*, stirred by no motion.

75. *Doth;* so $F_1$. Some modern edd. follow $F_2$ which has '*do* not Brutus bootless kneel,'—a flat remark for this supreme moment; and it is incredible that Shakespeare should have meant 'Brutus' here only to stand for 'Decius.' Such trifling was not his *way*.

*Cæs.* Et tu, Brute! Then fall, Cæsar! [*Dies.*

*Cin.* Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

*Cas.* Some to the common pulpits, and cry out 80
'Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!'

*Bru.* People and senators, be not affrighted;
Fly not; stand still: ambition's debt is paid.

*Casca.* Go to the pulpit, Brutus.

*Dec.* And Cassius too.

*Bru.* Where's Publius?

*Cin.* Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.

*Met.* Stand fast together, lest some friend of Cæsar's
Should chance—

*Bru.* Talk not of standing. Publius, good cheer;
There is no harm intended to your person, 90
Nor to no Roman else: so tell them, Publius.

*Cas.* And leave us, Publius; lest that the people,
Rushing on us, should do your age some mischief.

*Bru.* Do so: and let no man abide this deed
But we the doers.

*Re-enter* TREBONIUS.

*Cas.* Where is Antony?

*Tre.* Fled to his house amazed:
Men, wives and children stare, cry out and run
As it were doomsday.

77. *Et tu, Brute!* These words, though not clearly traceable to a classical source, were assigned by popular tradition in Shakespeare's day to the dying Cæsar,—a consideration which apparently overcame Shakespeare's habitual avoidance of Latin scraps. They are found (1) in the *True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of York*, where Edward appeals to the hostile Clarence with 'Et tu, Brute, wilt thou stab Cæsar too?' (2) in Nicholson's *Acolastus' After Wit* (1600), where the same line is quoted.

80. *the common pulpits*, the public platforms.

*Bru.* Fates, we will know your pleasures:
That we shall die, we know; 'tis but the time
And drawing days out, that men stand upon.

*Cas.* Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life
Cuts off so many years of fearing death.

*Bru.* Grant that, and then is death a benefit:
So are we Cæsar's friends, that have abridged
His time of fearing death. Stoop, Romans, stoop,
And let us bathe our hands in Cæsar's blood
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords:
Then walk we forth, even to the market-place,
And, waving our red weapons o'er our heads,
Let's all cry 'Peace, freedom and liberty!'

*Cas.* Stoop, then, and wash. How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

*Bru.* How many times shall Cæsar bleed in sport,
That now on Pompey's basis lies along
No worthier than the dust!

*Cas.* So oft as that shall be,
So often shall the knot of us be call'd
The men that gave their country liberty.

*Dec.* What, shall we forth?

*Cas.* Ay, every man away:
Brutus shall lead; and we will grace his heels
With the most boldest and best hearts of Rome.

*Enter a* Servant.

*Bru.* Soft! who comes here? A friend of Antony's.

100. *stand upon*, concern themselves about.

101, 102. Ff give this speech to Casca ('Cask.'), but he takes part nowhere else in the discussion of the leaders. Pope first gave it to Cassius.

115. *on Pompey's basis*, at the base of Pompey's statue. This was the actual scene of the murder, according to Plutarch. Shakespeare appears to assume that it was by the Capitol.

*Serv.* Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel;
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down;
And, being prostrate, thus he bade me say:
Brutus is noble, wise, valiant, and honest;
Cæsar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving:
Say I love Brutus and I honour him;
Say I fear'd Cæsar, honour'd him and loved him.
If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony
May safely come to him, and be resolved
How Cæsar hath deserved to lie in death,
Mark Antony shall not love Cæsar dead
So well as Brutus living; but will follow
The fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus
Thorough the hazards of this untrod state
With all true faith. So says my master Antony.

*Bru.* Thy master is a wise and valiant Roman;
I never thought him worse.
Tell him, so please him come unto this place,
He shall be satisfied, and, by my honour,
Depart untouch'd.

*Serv.* I'll fetch him presently. [*Exit.*

*Bru.* I know that we shall have him well to friend.

*Cas.* I wish we may: but yet have I a mind
That fears him much, and my misgiving still
Falls shrewdly to the purpose.

*Bru.* But here comes Antony.

*Re-enter* ANTONY.

Welcome, Mark Antony.

*Ant.* O mighty Cæsar! dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,

131. *resolved*, informed.
143. *to friend*, as our friend.
146. *Falls shrewdly to the purpose*, 'comes wondrous near the mark,' is pretty closely fulfilled.

Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well.
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank:
If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Cæsar's death's hour, nor no instrument
Of half that worth as those your swords, made rich
With the most noble blood of all this world.
I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,
Now, whilst your purpled hands do reek and smoke,
Fulfil your pleasure. Live a thousand years,
I shall not find myself so apt to die:
No place will please me so, no mean of death,
As here by Cæsar, and by you cut off,
The choice and master spirits of this age.

*Bru.* O Antony, beg not your death of us.
Though now we must appear bloody and cruel,
As, by our hands, and this our present act,
You see we do, yet see you but our hands
And this the bleeding business they have done:
Our hearts you see not; they are pitiful;
And pity to the general wrong of Rome—
As fire drives out fire, so pity pity—
Hath done this deed on Cæsar. For your part,
To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony:
Our arms in strength of malice, and our hearts
Of brothers' temper, do receive you in
With all kind love, good thoughts, and reverence.

*Cas.* Your voice shall be as strong as any man's
In the disposing of new dignities.

*Bru.* Only be patient till we have appeased
The multitude, beside themselves with fear,

152. *rank*, morbidly full-blooded.

174. *in strength of malice*, nerved with the hatred just displayed towards Cæsar, but which is innocuous to Antony.

And then we will deliver you the cause
Why I, that did love Cæsar when I struck him,
Have thus proceeded.
*Ant.* I doubt not of your wisdom.
Let each man render me his bloody hand:
First, Marcus Brutus, will I shake with you;
Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand;
Now, Decius Brutus, yours; now yours, Metellus;
Yours, Cinna; and, my valiant Casca, yours;
Though last, not least in love, yours, good Trebonius.
Gentlemen all,—alas, what shall I say?
My credit now stands on such slippery ground,
That one of two bad ways you must conceit me,
Either a coward or a flatterer.
That I did love thee, Cæsar, O, 'tis true:
If then thy spirit look upon us now,
Shall it not grieve thee dearer than thy death,
To see thy Antony making his peace,
Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes,
Most noble! in the presence of thy corse?
Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds,
Weeping as fast as they stream forth thy blood,
It would become me better than to close
In terms of friendship with thine enemies.
Pardon me, Julius! Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart;
Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand,
Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy lethe.
O world, thou wast the forest to this hart;
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.

181. *deliver*, relate to.
196. *dearer*, more deeply.
204. *bay'd*, driven to bay.
206. *Sign'd in thy spoil*, bearing the badge or brand of Cæsar's ruin, *i.e.* stained with his blood. Hunters customarily stained their hands with the blood of the slain deer.
206. *lethe*, slaughter (Lat. 'letum,' often spelt 'lethum,' death, especially violent death).

How like a deer, strucken by many princes,
Dost thou here lie!
*Cas.* Mark Antony,—
*Ant.* Pardon me, Caius Cassius:
The enemies of Cæsar shall say this;
Then, in a friend, it is cold modesty.
*Cas.* I blame you not for praising Cæsar so;
But what compáct mean you to have with us?
Will you be prick'd in number of our friends,
Or shall we on, and not depend on you?
*Ant.* Therefore I took your hands, but was, indeed,
Sway'd from the point by looking down on Cæsar.
Friends am I with you all and love you all,
Upon this hope, that you shall give me reasons
Why and wherein Cæsar was dangerous.
*Bru.* Or else were this a savage spectacle:
Our reasons are so full of good regard
That were you, Antony, the son of Cæsar,
You should be satisfied.
*Ant.* That 's all I seek:
And am moreover suitor that I may
Produce his body to the market-place;
And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,
Speak in the order of his funeral.
*Bru.* You shall, Mark Antony.
*Cas.* Brutus, a word with you.
[*Aside to Bru.*] You know not what you do: do not consent
That Antony speak in his funeral:
Know you how much the people may be moved
By that which he will utter?
*Bru.* By your pardon;

216. *prick'd*, marked on the list.
224. *so full of good regard*, derived from such lofty considerations.
228. *Produce*, bear forth.

I will myself into the pulpit first,
And show the reason of our Cæsar's death:
What Antony shall speak, I will protest
He speaks by leave and by permission,
And that we are contented Cæsar shall
Have all true rites and lawful ceremonies.
It shall advantage more than do us wrong.
*Cas.* I know not what may fall; I like it not.
*Bru.* Mark Antony, here, take you Cæsar's body.
You shall not in your funeral speech blame us,
But speak all good you can devise of Cæsar,
And say you do 't by our permission;
Else shall you not have any hand at all
About his funeral: and you shall speak
In the same pulpit whereto I am going,
After my speech is ended.
*Ant.* Be it so;
I do desire no more.
*Bru.* Prepare the body then, and follow us.
[*Exeunt all but Antony.*
*Ant.* O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,
Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue,
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife

257. *the tide of times*, the onward flow or course of the ages.

262. *limbs*. The commentators have stumbled at this word, and suggested in its place 'line' (Warburton), 'lives' or 'lymmes,' *i.e.* blood-hounds (Johnson), 'minds' (Dyce), etc. But Antony contemplates the physical manglings and maimings of man which will be wrought by civil war.

Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use
And dreadful objects so familiar
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds:
And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry 'Havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war;
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

*Enter a* Servant.

You serve Octavius Cæsar, do you not?

*Serv.* I do, Mark Antony.

*Ant.* Cæsar did write for him to come to Rome.

*Serv.* He did receive his letters, and is coming;
And bid me say to you by word of mouth—
O Cæsar! [*Seeing the body.*

*Ant.* Thy heart is big, get thee apart and weep.
Passion, I see, is catching; for mine eyes,
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
Began to water. Is thy master coming?

*Serv.* He lies to-night within seven leagues of Rome.

*Ant.* Post back with speed, and tell him what hath chanced:
Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,
No Rome of safety for Octavius yet;
Hie hence, and tell him so. Yet, stay awhile;
Thou shalt not back till I have borne this corse

271. *Ate*, a goddess of discord.
273. '*Havoc*,' 'no quarter.'
ib. *let slip*, a technical term of the chase for releasing *hounds*.
283. *Passion*, feeling.
289. *Rome*, with a play on 'room.'

Into the market-place: there shall I try,
In my oration, how the people take
The cruel issue of these bloody men;
According to the which, thou shalt discourse
To young Octavius of the state of things.
Lend me your hand. [*Exeunt with Cæsar's body.*

## Scene II. *The Forum*

*Enter* Brutus *and* Cassius, *and a throng of* Citizens.

*Citizens.* We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.

*Bru.* Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.
Cassius, go you into the other street,
And part the numbers.
Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;
Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;
And public reasons shall be rendered
Of Cæsar's death.

*First Cit.* I will hear Brutus speak.

*Sec. Cit.* I will hear Cassius; and compare their reasons,
When severally we hear them rendered. 10
[*Exit Cassius, with some of the Citizens. Brutus goes into the pulpit.*

*Third Cit.* The noble Brutus is ascended: silence!

*Bru.* Be patient till the last.
Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in

294. *issue*, deed (the 'issue' of their minds).
13. *lovers*, friends.
16. *censure*, judge.

your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Cæsar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer: not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Cæsar were living and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead, to live all freemen? As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

*All.* None, Brutus, none.

*Bru.* Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Cæsar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death.

*Enter* ANTONY *and others, with* CÆSAR'S *body.*

Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony: who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not? With this I depart,—that, as I slew my best lover for

41. *enrolled*, recorded. 43. *enforced*, exaggerated.

the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

*All.* Live, Brutus! live, live!

*First Cit.* Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

*Sec. Cit.* Give him a statue with his ancestors.

*Third Cit.* Let him be Cæsar.

*Fourth Cit.* Cæsar's better parts
Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

*First Cit.* We'll bring him to his house
With shouts and clamours.

*Bru.* My countrymen,—

*Sec. Cit.* Peace! silence! Brutus speaks.

*First Cit.* Peace, ho!

*Bru.* Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony:
Do grace to Cæsar's corpse, and grace his speech
Tending to Cæsar's glories; which Mark Antony,
By our permission, is allow'd to make.
I do entreat you, not a man depart,
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke. [*Exit.*

*First Cit.* Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.

*Third Cit.* Let him go up into the public chair;
We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

*Ant.* For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you. [*Goes into the pulpit.*

*Fourth Cit.* What does he say of Brutus?

*Third Cit.* He says, for Brutus' sake,
He finds himself beholding to us all.

*Fourth Cit.* 'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.

68. *the public chair*, what North calls 'the pulpit for orations,' *i.e.* the rostra in the Forum.

70. *beholding*, obliged.

*First Cit.* This Cæsar was a tyrant.
*Third Cit.* Nay, that 's certain:
We are blest that Rome is rid of him.
*Sec. Cit.* Peace! let us hear what Antony can say.
*Ant.* You gentle Romans,—
*Citizens.* Peace, ho! let us hear him.
*Ant.* Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones:
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men—
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;

85. *answer'd*, atoned for.
100. *on the Lupercal*, on the feast of the Lupercal.

And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgement! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.
*First Cit.* Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.
*Sec. Cit.* If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Cæsar has had great wrong.
*Third Cit.* Has he, masters?
I fear there will a worse come in his place.
*Fourth Cit.* Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown;
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.
*First Cit.* If it be found so, some will dear abide it.
*Sec. Cit.* Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping.
*Third Cit.* There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.
*Fourth Cit.* Now mark him, he begins again to speak.
*Ant.* But yesterday the word of Cæsar might
Have stood against the world: now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence.
O masters, if I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honourable men:
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honourable men.

But here's a parchment with the seal of Cæsar;
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will:
Let but the commons hear this testament—
Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read—
And they would go and kiss dead Cæsar's wounds
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood,
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.

*Fourth Cit.* We'll hear the will: read it, Mark Antony.

*All.* The will, the will! we will hear Cæsar's will.

*Ant.* Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;
It is not meet you know how Cæsar loved you.
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;
And, being men, hearing the will of Cæsar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad:
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;
For, if you should, O, what would come of it!

*Fourth Cit.* Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony;
You shall read us the will, Cæsar's will.

*Ant.* Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it:
I fear I wrong the honourable men
Whose daggers have stabb'd Cæsar; I do fear it.

*Fourth Cit.* They were traitors: honourable men!

*All.* The will! the testament!

*Sec. Cit.* They were villains, murderers: the will! read the will.

*Ant.* You will compel me, then, to read the will?

138. *napkins*, handkerchiefs.

Then make a ring about the corpse of Cæsar,
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?
*Several Cit.* Come down.
*Sec. Cit.* Descend.
*Third Cit.* You shall have leave.
[*Antony comes down.*
*Fourth Cit.* A ring; stand round.
*First Cit.* Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.
*Sec. Cit.* Room for Antony, most noble Antony.
*Ant.* Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.
*Several Cit.* Stand back; room; bear back.
*Ant.* If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle: I remember
The first time ever Cæsar put it on;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii:
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
See what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Cæsar follow'd it,
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel:
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Cæsar loved him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all;

177. *Nervii*, a warlike Gallic tribe, crushed by Cæsar in 58 B.C.

185. *Cæsar's angel*, his 'good genius'; alluding to the belief which evidently coloured Shakespeare's psychology, that every man has his 'dæmon' or spirit which keeps him, whose voice speaks through his highest intelligence (ii. 1. 66). But the belief shaded off into metaphor, and at times he can speak of 'our worser genius,' the source of temptations.

For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statuë,
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.
O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel
The dint of pity: these are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold
Our Cæsar's vesture wounded? Look you here,
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

*First Cit.* O piteous spectacle!

*Sec. Cit.* O noble Cæsar!

*Third Cit.* O woful day!

*Fourth Cit.* O traitors, villains!

*First Cit.* O most bloody sight!

*Sec. Cit.* We will be revenged.

*All.* Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay! Let not a traitor live!

*Ant.* Stay, countrymen.

*First Cit.* Peace there! hear the noble Antony.

*Sec. Cit.* We 'll hear him, we 'll follow him, we 'll die with him.

*Ant.* Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.
They that have done this deed are honourable:
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
That made them do it: they are wise and honourable,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.

198. *dint*, impression. 217. *griefs*, grievances.

I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts:
I am no orator, as Brutus is;
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,
That love my friend; and that they know full well
That gave me public leave to speak of him:
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;
Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
In every wound of Cæsar, that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

*All.* We 'll mutiny.

*First Cit.* We 'll burn the house of Brutus.

*Third Cit.* Away, then! come, seek the conspirators.

*Ant.* Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

*All.* Peace, ho! Hear Antony. Most noble Antony!

*Ant.* Why, friends, you go to do you know not what:
Wherein hath Cæsar thus deserved your loves?
Alas, you know not: I must tell you, then:
You have forgot the will I told you of.

*All.* Most true. The will! Let 's stay and hear the will.

*Ant.* Here is the will, and under Cæsar's seal.
To every Roman citizen he gives,
To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.

247. *drachmas*, the sum was stated by Plutarch in terms of this Greek coin, as approximately equivalent to the Roman denarius.

*Sec. Cit.* Most noble Cæsar! We'll revenge his death.

*Third Cit.* O royal Cæsar!

*Ant.* Hear me with patience.

*All.* Peace, ho!

*Ant.* Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
His private arbours and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,
And to your heirs for ever, common pleasures,
To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.
Here was a Cæsar! when comes such another?

*First Cit.* Never, never. Come, away, away!
We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
Take up the body.

*Sec. Cit.* Go fetch fire.

*Third Cit.* Pluck down benches.

*Fourth Cit.* Pluck down forms, windows, any thing. [*Exeunt Citizens with the body.*

*Ant.* Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt!

*Enter a* Servant.

How now, fellow!

*Serv.* Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

*Ant.* Where is he?

*Serv.* He and Lepidus are at Cæsar's house.

*Ant.* And thither will I straight to visit him:
He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,
And in this mood will give us any thing.

253. *orchards*, gardens.

254. *On this side Tiber.* So North. The gardens were in fact on the opposite (*i.e.* right) bank, near Janiculum. (Cf. Horace's 'Trans Tiberim longe cubat is, prope Cæsaris hortos'). Theobald needlessly proposed to read *on that side.*

255. *pleasures*, pleasaunces, pleasure-grounds.

256. *To walk abroad*, to walk about (in).

*Serv.* I heard him say, Brutus and Cassius
Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.
*Ant.* Belike they had some notice of the people,
How I had moved them. Bring me to Octavius.
[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III. *A street.*

*Enter* CINNA *the poet.*

*Cin.* I dreamt to-night that I did feast with Cæsar,
And things unluckily charge my fantasy:
I have no will to wander forth of doors,
Yet something leads me forth.

*Enter* Citizens.

*First Cit.* What is your name?
*Sec. Cit.* Whither are you going?
*Third Cit.* Where do you dwell?
*Fourth Cit.* Are you a married man or a bachelor?
*Sec. Cit.* Answer every man directly. 10
*First Cit.* Ay, and briefly.
*Fourth Cit.* Ay, and wisely.
*Third Cit.* Ay, and truly, you were best.
*Cin.* What is my name? Whither am I going? Where do I dwell? Am I a married man or a bachelor? Then, to answer every man directly and briefly, wisely and truly: wisely I say, I am a bachelor.
*Sec. Cit.* That's as much as to say, they are

2. *unluckily*, ominously. Craik read 'unlikely'; but Cinna means that he is conscious his fancies are of ill omen.

fools that marry: you 'll bear me a bang for that, I fear. Proceed; directly.

*Cin.* Directly, I am going to Cæsar's funeral.

*First Cit.* As a friend or an enemy?

*Cin.* As a friend.

*Sec. Cit.* That matter is answered directly.

*Fourth Cit.* For your dwelling,—briefly.

*Cin.* Briefly, I dwell by the Capitol.

*Third Cit.* Your name, sir, truly.

*Cin.* Truly, my name is Cinna.

*First Cit.* Tear him to pieces; he 's a conspirator.

*Cin.* I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.

*Fourth Cit.* Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses.

*Cin.* I am not Cinna the conspirator.

*Fourth Cit.* It is no matter, his name 's Cinna; pluck but his name out of his heart, and turn him going.

*Third Cit.* Tear him, tear him! Come, brands, ho! fire-brands: to Brutus', to Cassius'; burn all: some to Decius' house, and some to Casca's; some to Ligarius': away, go!

[*Exeunt.*

20. *bear me a bang*, come in for a blow from me.

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I. *A house in Rome.*

ANTONY, OCTAVIUS, *and* LEPIDUS, *seated at a table.*

*Ant.* These many, then, shall die; their names are prick'd.

*Oct.* Your brother too must die; consent you, Lepidus?

*Lep.* I do consent—

*Oct.* Prick him down, Antony.

*Lep.* Upon condition Publius shall not live,
Who is your sister's son, Mark Antony.

*Ant.* He shall not live; look, with a spot I damn him.
But, Lepidus, go you to Cæsar's house;
Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine
How to cut off some charge in legacies.

*Lep.* What, shall I find you here? 10

*Oct.* Or here, or at the Capitol. [*Exit Lepidus.*

*Ant.* This is a slight unmeritable man,
Meet to be sent on errands: is it fit,
The three-fold world divided, he should stand
One of the three to share it?

*Oct.* So you thought him,
And took his voice who should be prick'd to die
In our black sentence and proscription.

*Ant.* Octavius, I have seen more days than you:

*Scene 1. A house in Rome.* The original stage direction indicates no place. Plutarch describes the meeting of the triumvirs as 'in an island environed about with a little river.' But Shakespeare evidently intended it to be in Rome.

And though we lay these honours on this man,
To ease ourselves of divers slanderous loads,
He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold,
To groan and sweat under the business,
Either led or driven, as we point the way;
And having brought our treasure where we will,
Then take we down his load and turn him off,
Like to the empty ass, to shake his ears,
And graze in commons.

*Oct.* You may do your will;
But he 's a tried and valiant soldier.

*Ant.* So is my horse, Octavius, and for that
I do appoint him store of provender:
It is a creature that I teach to fight,
To wind, to stop, to run directly on,
His corporal motion govern'd by my spirit.
And, in some taste, is Lepidus but so;
He must be taught, and train'd, and bid go forth;
A barren-spirited fellow; one that feeds
On abject orts and imitations,
Which, out of use and staled by other men,
Begin his fashion: do not talk of him,
But as a property. And now, Octavius,
Listen great things: Brutus and Cassius
Are levying powers: we must straight make head:
Therefore let our alliance be combined,
Our best friends made, our means stretch'd;

32. *wind*, turn.
ib. *directly*, straight.
34. *in some taste*, in some degree.
37. *abject orts;* cast-away scraps. Theobald's emendation of Ff 'objects, arts.' The close connexion of the notions of 'abject' and 'ort,' compared with 'imitations,' makes this preferable to Staunton's 'abjects, orts,' which co-ordinates the three terms.
39. *Begin his fashion*, come into use with him.
42. *make head*, raise an armed force.
44. So $F_1$. The metre shows this line to be corrupt, but no satisfactory emendation has been suggested. $F_2$ has 'means stretch'd out.'

And let us presently go sit in council,
How covert matters may be best disclosed,
And open perils surest answered.
*Oct.* Let us do so: for we are at the stake,
And bay'd about with many enemies;
And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear,
Millions of mischiefs. [*Exeunt.*

## Scene II. *Camp near Sardis. Before Brutus's tent.*

*Drum. Enter* Brutus, Titinius, Lucius, *and* Soldiers; Lucilius *and* Pindarus *meeting them.*

*Bru.* Stand, ho!
*Lucil.* Give the word, ho! and stand.
*Bru.* What now, Lucilius! is Cassius near?
*Lucil.* He is at hand; and Pindarus is come
To do you salutation from his master.
*Bru.* He greets me well. Your master, Pindarus,
In his own change, or by ill officers,
Hath given me some worthy cause to wish
Things done, undone: but, if he be at hand,
I shall be satisfied.
*Pin.* I do not doubt
But that my noble master will appear

47. *answered*, met.
48. *at the stake;* an image from bear-baiting.

*Sc. 2. Enter Brutus, Titinius,* etc. The stage direction in Ff is 'Enter Brutus, Lucillius, and the Army. Titinius and Pindarus meete them.' But it is evident that Brutus meets Lucilius, whom he has sent to confer with Cassius, and who brings Cassius' servant Pindarus back with him. The stage directions of the Ff are of too doubtful authenticity to stand in the face of Shakespeare's clear intention.

6. *well*, in friendly terms.
7. *In his own change*, through some change in himself.

Such as he is, full of regard and honour.
*Bru.* He is not doubted. A word, Lucilius;
How he received you, let me be resolved.
*Lucil.* With courtesy and with respect enough;
But not with such familiar instances,
Nor with such free and friendly conference,
As he hath used of old.
*Bru.* Thou hast described
A hot friend cooling: ever note, Lucilius,
When love begins to sicken and decay,
It useth an enforced ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith;
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;
But when they should endure the bloody spur,
They fall their crests, and, like deceitful jades,
Sink in the trial. Comes his army on?
*Lucil.* They mean this night in Sardis to be quarter'd;
The greater part, the horse in general,
Are come with Cassius.
*Bru.* Hark! he is arrived.
[*Low march within.*
March gently on to meet him.

*Enter* CASSIUS *and his powers.*

*Cas.* Stand, ho!
*Bru.* Stand, ho! Speak the word along.
*First Sol.* Stand!
*Sec. Sol.* Stand!
*Third Sol.* Stand!
*Cas.* Most noble brother, you have done me wrong.
*Bru.* Judge me, you gods! wrong I mine enemies?

16. *familiar instances*, marks of familiarity.
23. *at hand*, in hand.

And, if not so, how should I wrong a brother?
*Cas.* Brutus, this sober form of yours hides wrongs;
And when you do them—
*Bru.* Cassius, be content;
Speak your griefs softly: I do know you well.
Before the eyes of both our armies here,
Which should perceive nothing but love from us,
Let us not wrangle: bid them move away;
Then in my tent, Cassius, enlarge your griefs,
And I will give you audience.
*Cas.* Pindarus,
Bid our commanders lead their charges off
A little from this ground.
*Bru.* Lucius, do you the like; and let no man
Come to our tent till we have done our conference.
Lucilius and Titinius guard our door. [*Exeunt.*

## Scene III. *Brutus's tent.*

*Enter* Brutus *and* Cassius.

*Cas.* That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this:
You have condemn'd and noted Lucius Pella
For taking bribes here of the Sardians;
Wherein my letters, praying on his side,

46. *enlarge*, vent openly.
48. *charges*, forces.
50-52. *Lucius . . . Lucilius;* Craik's emendation for Ff 'Lucilius . . . Lucius.' The decisive ground for this change is iv. 3. 126, where Lucilius is clearly 'guarding the door.' The names, perhaps abbreviated in the MS., were easily confused; and Lucilius, the confidential friend of Brutus, was more likely to be chosen for this trust than the serving-boy Lucius, even though, as the Camb. edd. suggest, Shakespeare conceived him as a 'page.'
2. *noted*, marked with a stigma.

Because I knew the man, were slighted off.
*Bru.* You wrong'd yourself to write in such a case.
*Cas.* In such a time as this it is not meet
That every nice offence should bear his comment.
*Bru.* Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself
Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm ;
To sell and mart your offices for gold
To undeservers.
*Cas.* I an itching palm !
You know that you are Brutus that speak this,
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last.
*Bru.* The name of Cassius honours this corruption,
And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.
*Cas.* Chastisement !
*Bru.* Remember March, the ides of March remember :
Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake ?
What villain touch'd his body, that did stab,
And not for justice ? What, shall one of us,
That struck the foremost man of all this world
But for supporting robbers, shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes,
And sell the mighty space of our large honours
For so much trash as may be grasped thus ?
I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon,
Than such a Roman.
*Cas.* Brutus, bait not me ;
I'll not endure it : you forget yourself,
To hedge me in ; I am a soldier, I,
Older in practice, abler than yourself
To make conditions.

27. *bay*, bark at.
28. *bait*, harass (as dogs a bear). All Ff agree in this reading. Theobald plausibly but needlessly read 'bay.'

*Bru.* Go to; you are not, Cassius.
*Cas.* I am.
*Bru.* I say you are not.
*Cas.* Urge me no more, I shall forget myself;
Have mind upon your health, tempt me no farther.
*Bru.* Away, slight man!
*Cas.* Is 't possible?
*Bru.* Hear me, for I will speak.
Must I give way and room to your rash choler?
Shall I be frighted when a madman stares?
*Cas.* O ye gods, ye gods! must I endure all this?
*Bru.* All this! ay, more: fret till your proud heart break;
Go show your slaves how choleric you are,
And make your bondmen tremble. Must I budge?
Must I observe you? must I stand and crouch
Under your testy humour? By the gods,
You shall digest the venom of your spleen,
Though it do split you; for, from this day forth,
I 'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
When you are waspish.
*Cas.* Is it come to this?
*Bru.* You say you are a better soldier:
Let it appear so; make your vaunting true,
And it shall please me well: for mine own part,
I shall be glad to learn of noble men.
*Cas.* You wrong me every way; you wrong me, Brutus;
I said, an elder soldier, not a better:
Did I say 'better'?
*Bru.* If you did, I care not.
*Cas.* When Cæsar lived, he durst not thus have moved me.
*Bru.* Peace, peace! you durst not so have tempted him.

36. *health*, safety. 45. *observe you*, obsequiously humour you.

*Cas.* I durst not!

*Bru.* No.

*Cas.* What, durst not tempt him!

*Bru.* For your life you durst not.

*Cas.* Do not presume too much upon my love; I may do that I shall be sorry for.

*Bru.* You have done that you should be sorry for.

There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats,
For I am arm'd so strong in honesty
That they pass by me as the idle wind,
Which I respect not. I did send to you
For certain sums of gold, which you denied me:
For I can raise no money by vile means:
By heaven, I had rather coin my heart,
And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring
From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash
By any indirection: I did send
To you for gold to pay my legions,
Which you denied me: was that done like Cassius?
Should I have answer'd Caius Cassius so?
When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous,
To lock such rascal counters from his friends,
Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts;
Dash him to pieces!

*Cas.* I denied you not.

*Bru.* You did.

*Cas.* I did not: he was but a fool that brought
My answer back. Brutus hath rived my heart:
A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

*Bru.* I do not, till you practise them on me.

*Cas.* You love me not.

*Bru.* I do not like your faults.

*Cas.* A friendly eye could never see such faults.

75. *indirection*, malpractice. 80. *rascal*, worthless.

*Bru.* A flatterer's would not, though they do appear
As huge as high Olympus.
*Cas.* Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,
For Cassius is aweary of the world;
Hated by one he loves; braved by his brother;
Check'd like a bondman; all his faults observed,
Set in a note-book, learn'd, and conn'd by rote,
To cast into my teeth. O, I could weep
My spirit from mine eyes! There is my dagger,
And here my naked breast; within, a heart
Dearer than Plutus' mine, richer than gold:
If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth;
I, that denied thee gold, will give my heart:
Strike, as thou didst at Cæsar; for, I know,
When thou didst hate him worst, thou lovedst him better
Than ever thou lovedst Cassius.
*Bru.* Sheathe your dagger:
Be angry when you will, it shall have scope;
Do what you will, dishonour shall be humour.
O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb
That carries anger as the flint bears fire;
Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again.
*Cas.* Hath Cassius lived
To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus,
When grief, and blood ill-temper'd, vexeth him?
*Bru.* When I spoke that, I was ill-temper'd too.
*Cas.* Do you confess so much? Give me your hand.
*Bru.* And my heart too.
*Cas.* O Brutus!
*Bru.* What 's the matter?

102. *Plutus'*, the god of riches. Ff Pluto's.

*Cas.* Have not you love enough to bear with me,
When that rash humour which my mother gave me
Makes me forgetful?

*Bru.* Yes, Cassius; and, from henceforth,
When you are over-earnest with your Brutus,
He 'll think your mother chides, and leave you so.

*Poet.* [*Within*] Let me go in to see the generals;
There is some grudge between 'em, 'tis not meet
They be alone.

*Lucil.* [*Within*] You shall not come to them.

*Poet.* [*Within*] Nothing but death shall stay me.

*Enter* POET, *followed by* LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, *and* LUCIUS.

*Cas.* How now! what 's the matter?

*Poet.* For shame, you generals! what do you mean?
Love, and be friends, as two such men should be;
For I have seen more years, I 'm sure, than ye.

*Cas.* Ha, ha! how vilely doth this cynic rhyme!

*Bru.* Get you hence, sirrah; saucy fellow, hence!

*Cas.* Bear with him, Brutus; 'tis his fashion.

*Bru.* I 'll know his humour, when he knows his time:
What should the wars do with these jigging fools?
Companion, hence!

*Cas.* Away, away, be gone!

[*Exit Poet.*

124. *Poet.* In Plutarch the intruder is not a poet but a quasi-philosopher,—a 'counterfeit Cynicke' whose whimsical impudence amuses the camp. Cf. note to 133 below.

131, 132. The verses in Plutarch, here substantially reproduced, are those 'which old Nestor said in Homer.'

133. *cynic.* The Cynics, or followers of Diogenes, professed, like their master, a bold manner of speech, and deliberately ignored social conventions.

138. *Companion*, fellow.

*Bru.* Lucilius and Titinius, bid the commanders
Prepare to lodge their companies to-night.
*Cas.* And come yourselves, and bring Messala with you
Immediately to us.
[*Exeunt Lucilius and Titinius.*
*Bru.* Lucius, a bowl of wine! [*Exit Lucius.*
*Cas.* I did not think you could have been so angry.
*Bru.* O Cassius, I am sick of many griefs.
*Cas.* Of your philosophy you make no use,
If you give place to accidental evils.
*Bru.* No man bears sorrow better. Portia is dead.
*Cas.* Ha! Portia!
*Bru.* She is dead.
*Cas.* How 'scaped I killing when I cross'd you so?
O insupportable and touching loss!
Upon what sickness?
*Bru.* Impatient of my absence,
And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony
Have made themselves so strong:—for with her death
That tidings came;—with this she fell distract,
And, her attendants absent, swallow'd fire.
*Cas.* And died so?
*Bru.* Even so.
*Cas.* O ye immortal gods!

*Re-enter* LUCIUS, *with wine and taper.*

*Bru.* Speak no more of her. Give me a bowl of wine.
In this I bury all unkindness, Cassius.
*Cas.* My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge,
Fill, Lucius, till the wine o'erswell the cup;
I cannot drink too much of Brutus' love.
*Bru.* Come in, Titinius! [*Exit Lucius.*

*Re-enter* TITINIUS, *with* MESSALA.

Welcome, good Messala.
Now sit we close about this taper here,
And call in question our necessities.
*Cas.* Portia, art thou gone?
*Bru.* No more, I pray you.
Messala, I have here received letters,
That young Octavius and Mark Antony
Come down upon us with a mighty power,
Bending their expedition toward Philippi.
*Mes.* Myself have letters of the selfsame tenour.
*Bru.* With what addition?
*Mes.* That by proscription and bills of outlawry,
Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus,
Have put to death an hundred senators.
*Bru.* Therein our letters do not well agree;
Mine speak of seventy senators that died
By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.
*Cas.* Cicero one!
*Mes.* Cicero is dead,
And by that order of proscription.
Had you your letters from your wife, my lord?
*Bru.* No, Messala.
*Mes.* Nor nothing in your letters writ of her?
*Bru.* Nothing, Messala.
*Mes.* That, methinks, is strange.
*Bru.* Why ask you? hear you aught of her in yours?
*Mes.* No, my lord.
*Bru.* Now, as you are a Roman, tell me true.
*Mes.* Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell:
For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.
*Bru.* Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala:
With meditating that she must die once,

I have the patience to endure it now.

*Mes.* Even so great men great losses should endure.

*Cas.* I have as much of this in art as you,
But yet my nature could not bear it so.

*Bru.* Well, to our work alive. What do you think
Of marching to Philippi presently?

*Cas.* I do not think it good.

*Bru.* Your reason?

*Cas.* This it is:
'Tis better that the enemy seek us:
So shall he waste his means, weary his soldiers,
Doing himself offence; whilst we, lying still,
Are full of rest, defence, and nimbleness.

*Bru.* Good reasons must, of force, give place to better.
The people 'twixt Philippi and this ground
Do stand but in a forced affection;
For they have grudged us contribution:
The enemy, marching along by them,
By them shall make a fuller number up,
Come on refresh'd, new-added, and encouraged;
From which advantage shall we cut him off,
If at Philippi we do face him there,
These people at our back.

*Cas.* Hear me, good brother.

*Bru.* Under your pardon. You must note beside,
That we have tried the utmost of our friends,
Our legions are brim-full, our cause is ripe:
The enemy increaseth every day;
We, at the height, are ready to decline.
There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life

201. *offence*, harm. 209. *new-added*, reinforced.
220. *Omitted*, neglected.

Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

*Cas.* Then, with your will, go on;
We'll along ourselves, and meet them at Philippi.

*Bru.* The deep of night is crept upon our talk,
And nature must obey necessity;
Which we will niggard with a little rest.
There is no more to say?

*Cas.* No more. Good night:
Early to-morrow will we rise, and hence.

*Bru.* Lucius! [*Enter Lucius.*] My gown.
[*Exit Lucius.*] Farewell, good Messala:
Good night, Titinius. Noble, noble Cassius,
Good night, and good repose.

*Cas.* O my dear brother!
This was an ill beginning of the night:
Never come such division 'tween our souls!
Let it not, Brutus.

*Bru.* Every thing is well.

*Cas.* Good night, my lord.

*Bru.* Good night, good brother.

*Tit. Mes.* Good night, Lord Brutus.

*Bru.* Farewell, every one.
[*Exeunt all but Brutus.*

*Re-enter* LUCIUS, *with the gown.*

Give me the gown. Where is thy instrument?

*Luc.* Here in the tent.

*Bru.* What, thou speak'st drowsily?
Poor knave, I blame thee not; thou art o'erwatch'd.
Call Claudius and some other of my men;
I'll have them sleep on cushions in my tent.

*Luc.* Varro and Claudius!

228. *niggard*, sparingly supply. 241. *knave*, boy.

*Enter* VARRO *and* CLAUDIUS.

*Var.* Calls my lord?
*Bru.* I pray you, sirs, lie in my tent and sleep;
It may be I shall raise you by and by
On business to my brother Cassius.
*Var.* So please you, we will stand and watch your pleasure.
*Bru.* I will not have it so: lie down, good sirs;
It may be I shall otherwise bethink me.
Look, Lucius, here's the book I sought for so;
I put it in the pocket of my gown.
[*Var. and Clau. lie down.*
*Luc.* I was sure your lordship did not give it me.
*Bru.* Bear with me, good boy, I am much forgetful.
Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile,
And touch thy instrument a strain or two?
*Luc.* Ay, my lord, an't please you.
*Bru.* It does, my boy:
I trouble thee too much, but thou art willing.
*Luc.* It is my duty, sir.
*Bru.* I should not urge thy duty past thy might;
I know young bloods look for a time of rest.
*Luc.* I have slept, my lord, already.
*Bru.* It was well done; and thou shalt sleep again;
I will not hold thee long: if I do live,
I will be good to thee. [*Music, and a song.*
This is a sleepy tune. O murderous slumber,
Lay'st thou thy leaden mace upon my boy,
That plays thee music? Gentle knave, good night;
I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee:
If thou dost nod, thou break'st thy instrument;
I'll take it from thee; and, good boy, good night.

Let me see, let me see; is not the leaf turn'd down
Where I left reading? Here it is, I think.

*Enter the Ghost of* CÆSAR.

How ill this taper burns! Ha! who comes here?
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me. Art thou any thing?
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
That makest my blood cold and my hair to stare?
Speak to me what thou art.

*Ghost.* Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

*Bru.* Why comest thou?

*Ghost.* To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

*Bru.* Well; then I shall see thee again?

*Ghost.* Ay, at Philippi.

*Bru.* Why, I will see thee at Philippi, then.
[*Exit Ghost.*

Now I have taken heart thou vanishest:
Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee.
Boy, Lucius! Varro! Claudius! Sirs, awake!
Claudius!

*Luc.* The strings, my lord, are false.

*Bru.* He thinks he still is at his instrument.
Lucius, awake!

*Luc.* My lord?

*Bru.* Didst thou dream, Lucius, that thou so criedst out?

*Luc.* My lord, I do not know that I did cry.

*Bru.* Yes, that thou didst: didst thou see any thing?

*Luc.* Nothing, my lord.

274. *Enter the Ghost of Cæsar.* This is Shakespeare's addition. In Plutarch the apparition describes itself merely as 'thy evil spirit, Brutus.'

*Bru.* Sleep again, Lucius. Sirrah Claudius! [To *Var.*] Fellow thou, awake!

*Var.* My lord?

*Clau.* My lord?

*Bru.* Why did you so cry out, sirs, in your sleep?

*Var. Clau.* Did we, my lord?

*Bru.* Ay: saw you any thing?

*Var.* No, my lord, I saw nothing.

*Clau.* Nor I, my lord.

*Bru.* Go and commend me to my brother Cassius;
Bid him set on his powers betimes before,
And we will follow.

*Var. Clau.* It shall be done, my lord.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

### Scene I. *The plains of Philippi.*

*Enter* Octavius, Antony, *and their* Army.

*Oct.* Now, Antony, our hopes are answered:
You said the enemy would not come down,
But keep the hills and upper regions;
It proves not so: their battles are at hand;
They mean to warn us at Philippi here,
Answering before we do demand of them.

*Ant.* Tut, I am in their bosoms, and I know
Wherefore they do it: they could be content

4. *battles*, forces. battle. L.

5. *warn*, challenge, offer

8. *could be content*, would be glad.

To visit other places; and come down
With fearful bravery, thinking by this face
To fasten in our thoughts that they have courage;
But 'tis not so.

*Enter a* Messenger.

*Mess.* Prepare you, generals:
The enemy comes on in gallant show;
Their bloody sign of battle is hung out,
And something to be done immediately.

*Ant.* Octavius, lead your battle softly on,
Upon the left hand of the even field.

*Oct.* Upon the right hand I; keep thou the left.

*Ant.* Why do you cross me in this exigent?

*Oct.* I do not cross you; but I will do so.
[*March.*

*Drum.* *Enter* BRUTUS, CASSIUS, *and their* Army; LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, MESSALA, *and others.*

*Bru.* They stand, and would have parley.

*Cas.* Stand fast, Titinius: we must out and talk.

*Oct.* Mark Antony, shall we give sign of battle?

*Ant.* No, Cæsar, we will answer on their charge.

10. *fearful bravery*, timorous ostentation of valour.

10. *face*, show of boldness.

17. *even*, level.

19. *exigent*, emergency.

20. *I will do so*, i.e. 'as I have said.' Octavius means that he does not differ for the sake of having his own way, but will have it nevertheless. Rolfe (followed by Gollancz) interprets: 'I will do *as you say*,' arguing from the fact that in the actual battle the forces of Octavius did take the left (Octavius himself lying sick), Brutus engaging him with the republican right. But Shakespeare takes no notice of the parallel incident in Plutarch, where Brutus begs and obtains the right wing from Cassius, the older and better soldier. We cannot, therefore, assume that Shakespeare meant him to lead the right and consequently Octavius the imperial left. There is thence no reason to forego the natural (and highly dramatic) meaning of Octavius' words.

Make forth; the generals would have some words.
*Oct.* Stir not until the signal.
*Bru.* Words before blows: is it so, countrymen?
*Oct.* Not that we love words better, as you do.
*Bru.* Good words are better than bad strokes, Octavius.
*Ant.* In your bad strokes, Brutus, you give good words:
Witness the hole you made in Cæsar's heart,
Crying 'Long live! hail, Cæsar!'
*Cas.* Antony,
The posture of your blows are yet unknown;
But for your words, they rob the Hybla bees,
And leave them honeyless.
*Ant.* Not stingless too.
*Bru.* O, yes, and soundless too;
For you have stol'n their buzzing, Antony,
And very wisely threat before you sting.
*Ant.* Villains, you did not so, when your vile daggers
Hack'd one another in the sides of Cæsar:
You show'd your teeth like apes, and fawn'd like hounds,
And bow'd like bondmen, kissing Cæsar's feet;
Whilst damned Casca, like a cur, behind
Struck Cæsar on the neck. O you flatterers!
*Cas.* Flatterers! Now, Brutus, thank yourself:
This tongue had not offended so to-day,
If Cassius might have ruled.
*Oct.* Come, come, the cause: if arguing make us sweat,
The proof of it will turn to redder drops.
Look;
I draw a sword against conspirators;

33. *posture*, position.
34. *Hybla*, one of three towns of this name in Sicily, celebrated for its honey.

When think you that the sword goes up again?
Never, till Cæsar's three and thirty wounds
Be well avenged; or till another Cæsar
Have added slaughter to the sword of traitors.
*Bru.* Cæsar, thou canst not die by traitors' hands,
Unless thou bring'st them with thee.
*Oct.* So I hope;
I was not born to die on Brutus' sword.
*Bru.* O, if thou wert the noblest of thy strain,
Young man, thou couldst not die more honourable.
*Cas.* A peevish schoolboy, worthless of such honour,
Join'd with a masker and a reveller!
*Ant.* Old Cassius still!
*Oct.* Come, Antony, away!
Defiance, traitors, hurl we in your teeth:
If you dare fight to-day, come to the field;
If not, when you have stomachs.
[*Exeunt Octavius, Antony, and their army.*
*Cas.* Why, now, blow wind, swell billow and swim bark!
The storm is up, and all is on the hazard.
*Bru.* Ho, Lucilius! hark, a word with you.
*Lucil.* [*Standing forth*] My lord?
[*Brutus and Lucilius converse apart.*
*Cas.* Messala!
*Mes.* [*Standing forth*] What says my general?
*Cas.* Messala,
This is my birth-day; as this very day
Was Cassius born. Give me thy hand, Messala:
Be thou my witness that against my will,
As Pompey was, am I compell'd to set
Upon one battle all our liberties.

52. *goes up*, is sheathed.
66. *stomachs*, inclination.
72. *as this very day* (on) this very day. 'As' was used to specify determinations of time; cf. modern '*as* yet.'

You know that I held Epicurus strong
And his opinion: now I change my mind,
And partly credit things that do presage.
Coming from Sardis, on our former ensign
Two mighty eagles fell, and there they perch'd,
Gorging and feeding from our soldiers' hands;
Who to Philippi here consorted us:
This morning are they fled away and gone;
And in their steads do ravens, crows and kites,
Fly o'er our heads and downward look on us,
As we were sickly prey: their shadows seem
A canopy most fatal, under which
Our army lies, ready to give up the ghost.

*Mes.* Believe not so.

*Cas.* I but believe it partly;
For I am fresh of spirit and resolved
To meet all perils very constantly.

*Bru.* Even so, Lucilius.

*Cas.* Now, most noble Brutus,
The gods to-day stand friendly, that we may,
Lovers in peace, lead on our days to age!
But since the affairs of men rest still incertain,
Let 's reason with the worst that may befall.
If we do lose this battle, then is this
The very last time we shall speak together:
What are you then determined to do?

*77. I held Epicurus strong and his opinion.* The theory of divinations was one of the points most hotly debated between the Epicureans and Stoics. The Stoics, holding that the universe was permeated with divine influence ('in moving your little finger you move God'), were the staunchest upholders of the significance of omens; the Epicureans, regarding the gods as dwelling apart from the world and indifferent to its affairs, repudiated presages and explained all 'visions' as optical illusions of sense. Shakespeare had read in Plutarch Cassius' elaborate exposition in this sense of Brutus' vision at Sardis.

80. *former*, foremost.
83. *consorted*, accompanied.
88. *fatal*, bodeful.
95. *Lovers*, friends.

*Bru.* Even by the rule of that philosophy
By which I did blame Cato for the death
Which he did give himself, I know not how,
But I do find it cowardly and vile,
For fear of what might fall, so to prevent
The time of life: arming myself with patience
To stay the providence of some high powers
That govern us below.

*Cas.* Then, if we lose this battle,
You are contented to be led in triumph
Thorough the streets of Rome?

*Bru.* No, Cassius, no: think not, thou noble Roman,
That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome;
He bears too great a mind. But this same day
Must end that work the ides of March begun;
And whether we shall meet again I know not.
Therefore our everlasting farewell take:
For ever, and for ever, farewell, Cassius!
If we do meet again, why, we shall smile;

101-108. The construction is somewhat ambiguous. But it is better (with Craik and Camb. edd.) to make 'I know not how' depend on what precedes than (with Dyce) to suppose a long parenthesis, 'I know not how . . . life,' foreign to the simple style of this play; the first two lines being then a direct answer to Cassius' question, which, however, they do not neatly fit. Brutus' argument has been much discussed. Plutarch makes him say: 'Being yet but a young man and not over-greatly experienced in the world, I trust[ed] (I know not how) a certain rule of Philosophy by the which I did greatly blame and reprove Cato for killing himself . . . but being now in the midst of the danger, I am of a contrary mind.' Shakespeare's Brutus does not thus formally announce his retractation; he is startled into it by the sudden vision of a Roman triumph.

102. *Cato*, of Utica, who committed suicide after the triumph of Cæsar at Pharsalia. This incident was doubtless familiar to Shakespeare's audience from the 'Cæsar and Pompey' plays (cf. Introduction).

105. *prevent*, anticipate.

106. *The time of life*, the period or close of life.

If not, why then, this parting was well made.
*Cas.* For ever, and for ever, farewell, Brutus! 120
If we do meet again, we 'll smile indeed;
If not, 'tis true this parting was well made.
*Bru.* Why, then, lead on. O, that a man might know
The end of this day's business ere it come!
But it sufficeth that the day will end,
And then the end is known. Come, ho! away!
[*Exeunt.*

## Scene II. *The same. The field of battle.*

*Alarum. Enter* Brutus *and* Messala.

*Bru.* Ride, ride, Messala, ride, and give these bills
Unto the legions on the other side. [*Loud alarum.*
Let them set on at once; for I perceive
But cold demeanour in Octavius' wing,
And sudden push gives them the overthrow.
Ride, ride, Messala: let them all come down.
[*Exeunt.*

## Scene III. *Another part of the field.*

*Alarums. Enter* Cassius *and* Titinius.

*Cas.* O, look, Titinius, look, the villains fly!
Myself have to mine own turn'd enemy:
This ensign here of mine was turning back;
I slew the coward, and did take it from him.
*Tit.* O Cassius, Brutus gave the word too early;

1. *bills*, papers, written orders.
3. *ensign*, standard-bearer.
4. *it*, the standard.

Who, having some advantage on Octavius,
Took it too eagerly: his soldiers fell to spoil,
Whilst we by Antony are all enclosed.

*Enter* PINDARUS.

*Pin.* Fly further off, my lord, fly further off;
Mark Antony is in your tents, my lord:
Fly, therefore, noble Cassius, fly far off.

*Cas.* This hill is far enough. Look, look, Titinius;
Are those my tents where I perceive the fire?

*Tit.* They are, my lord.

*Cas.* Titinius, if thou lovest me,
Mount thou my horse, and hide thy spurs in him,
Till he have brought thee up to yonder troops,
And here again; that I may rest assured
Whether yond troops are friend or enemy.

*Tit.* I will be here again, even with a thought.
[*Exit.*

*Cas.* Go, Pindarus, get higher on that hill;
My sight was ever thick; regard Titinius,
And tell me what thou notest about the field.
[*Pindarus ascends the hill.*
This day I breathed first: time is come round,
And where I did begin, there shall I end;
My life is run his compass. Sirrah, what news?

*Pin.* [*Above*] O my lord!

*Cas.* What news?

*Pin.* [*Above*] Titinius is enclosed round about
With horsemen, that make to him on the spur;
Yet he spurs on. Now they are almost on him.
Now, Titinius! Now some light. O, he lights too.
He 's ta'en. [*Shout.*] And, hark! they shout for joy.

19. *with a thought*, quick as thought. 31. *light*, alight.

*Cas.* Come down, behold no more.
O, coward that I am, to live so long,
To see my best friend ta'en before my face!

PINDARUS *descends.*

Come hither, sirrah:
In Parthia did I take thee prisoner;
And then I swore thee, saving of thy life,
That whatsoever I did bid thee do,
Thou shouldst attempt it. Come now, keep thine oath;
Now be a freeman: and with this good sword,
That ran through Cæsar's bowels, search this bosom.
Stand not to answer: here, take thou the hilts;
And, when my face is cover'd, as 'tis now,
Guide thou the sword. [*Pindarus stabs him.*]
Cæsar, thou art revenged,
Even with the sword that kill'd thee. [*Dies.*

*Pin.* So, I am free; yet would not so have been,
Durst I have done my will. O Cassius,
Far from this country Pindarus shall run,
Where never Roman shall take note of him.
[*Exit.*

*Re-enter* TITINIUS *with* MESSALA.

*Mes.* It is but change, Titinius; for Octavius
Is overthrown by noble Brutus' power,
As Cassius' legions are by Antony.

*Tit.* These tidings will well comfort Cassius.

*Mes.* Where did you leave him?

*Tit.* All disconsolate,
With Pindarus his bondman, on this hill.

*Mes.* Is not that he that lies upon the ground?

*Tit.* He lies not like the living. O my heart!

43. *hilts* (of a single weapon).

*Mes.* Is not that he?
*Tit.* No, this was he, Messala,
But Cassius is no more. O setting sun,
As in thy red rays thou dost sink to night,
So in his red blood Cassius' day is set;
The sun of Rome is set! Our day is gone;
Clouds, dews, and dangers come; our deeds are done!
Mistrust of my success hath done this deed.
*Mes.* Mistrust of good success hath done this deed.
O hateful error, melancholy's child,
Why dost thou show to the apt thoughts of men
The things that are not? O error, soon conceived,
Thou never comest unto a happy birth,
But kill'st the mother that engender'd thee!
*Tit.* What, Pindarus! where art thou, Pindarus?
*Mes.* Seek him, Titinius, whilst I go to meet
The noble Brutus, thrusting this report
Into his ears; I may say, thrusting it;
For piercing steel and darts envenomed
Shall be as welcome to the ears of Brutus
As tidings of this sight.
*Tit.* Hie you, Messala,
And I will seek for Pindarus the while.
[*Exit Messala.*
Why didst thou send me forth, brave Cassius?
Did I not meet thy friends? and did not they
Put on my brows this wreath of victory,
And bid me give it thee? Didst thou not hear their shouts?
Alas, thou hast misconstrued every thing!
But, hold thee, take this garland on thy brow;

66. *success*, issue. 68. *apt*, impressionable.

Thy Brutus bid me give it thee, and I
Will do his bidding. Brutus, come apace,
And see how I regarded Caius Cassius.
By your leave, gods:—this is a Roman's part:
Come, Cassius' sword, and find Titinius' heart. [*Kills himself.*

*Alarum.* *Re-enter* MESSALA, *with* BRUTUS, *young* CATO, STRATO, VOLUMNIUS, *and* LUCILIUS.

*Bru.* Where, where, Messala, doth his body lie?
*Mes.* Lo, yonder, and Titinius mourning it.
*Bru.* Titinius' face is upward.
*Cato.* He is slain.
*Bru.* O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!
Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords
In our own proper entrails. [*Low alarums.*
*Cato.* Brave Titinius!
Look, whether he have not crown'd dead Cassius!
*Bru.* Are yet two Romans living such as these?
The last of all the Romans, fare thee well!
It is impossible that ever Rome
Should breed thy fellow. Friends, I owe more tears
To this dead man than you shall see me pay.
I shall find time, Cassius, I shall find time.
Come, therefore, and to Thasos send his body:
His funerals shall not be in our camp,
Lest it discomfort us. Lucilius, come;
And come, young Cato; let us to the field.
Labeo and Flavius, set our battles on:
'Tis three o'clock; and, Romans, yet ere night
We shall try fortune in a second fight. [*Exeunt.*

96. *proper* (emphasising 'own').
104. *Thasos* (Ff 'Tharsus'), a large island in the North Ægean, off the coast of Thrace, from which the field of Philippi was not far distant.
106. *discomfort*, discourage.
108. *set our battles on*, array our forces.

SCENE IV. *Another part of the field.*

*Alarum. Enter fighting,* Soldiers *of both armies; then* BRUTUS, *young* CATO, LUCILIUS, *and others.*

*Bru.* Yet, countrymen, O, yet hold up your heads!

*Cato.* What bastard doth not? Who will go with me?
I will proclaim my name about the field:
I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!
A foe to tyrants, and my country's friend;
I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!

*Bru.* And I am Brutus, Marcus Brutus, I
Brutus, my country's friend; know me for Brutus! [*Exit.*

*Lucil.* O young and noble Cato, art thou down?
Why, now thou diest as bravely as Titinius; 10
And mayst be honour'd, being Cato's son.

*First Sold.* Yield, or thou diest.

*Lucil.* Only I yield to die:
There is so much that thou wilt kill me straight;
[*Offering money.*
Kill Brutus, and be honour'd in his death.

*First Sold.* We must not. A noble prisoner!

*Sec. Sold.* Room, ho! Tell Antony, Brutus is ta'en.

*First Sold.* I'll tell the news. Here comes the general.

*Enter* ANTONY.

Brutus is ta'en, Brutus is ta'en, my lord.

*Ant.* Where is he?

*Lucil.* Safe, Antony; Brutus is safe enough:
I dare assure thee that no enemy
Shall ever take alive the noble Brutus:
The gods defend him from so great a shame!
When you do find him, or alive or dead,
He will be found like Brutus, like himself.
*Ant.* This is not Brutus, friend; but, I assure you,
A prize no less in worth: keep this man safe;
Give him all kindness: I had rather have
Such men my friends than enemies. Go on,
And see whether Brutus be alive or dead;
And bring us word unto Octavius' tent
How every thing is chanced. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE V. *Another part of the field.*

*Enter* BRUTUS, DARDANIUS, CLITUS, STRATO, *and* VOLUMNIUS.

*Bru.* Come, poor remains of friends, rest on this rock.
*Cli.* Statilius show'd the torch-light, but, my lord,
He came not back: he is or ta'en or slain.
*Bru.* Sit thee down, Clitus: slaying is the word;
It is a deed in fashion. Hark thee, Clitus.
[*Whispers.*
*Cli.* What, I, my lord? No, not for all the world.
*Bru.* Peace then! no words.
*Cli.* I'll rather kill myself.
*Bru.* Hark thee, Dardanius. [*Whispers.*
*Dar.* Shall I do such a deed?

*Cli.* O Dardanius!
*Dar.* O Clitus!
*Cli.* What ill request did Brutus make to thee?
*Dar.* To kill him, Clitus. Look, he meditates.
*Cli.* Now is that noble vessel full of grief,
That it runs over even at his eyes.
*Bru.* Come hither, good Volumnius; list a word.
*Vol.* What says my lord?
*Bru.* Why, this, Volumnius:
The ghost of Cæsar hath appear'd to me
Two several times by night; at Sardis once,
And, this last night, here in Philippi fields:
I know my hour is come.
*Vol.* Not so, my lord.
*Bru.* Nay, I am sure it is, Volumnius.
Thou seest the world, Volumnius, how it goes;
Our enemies have beat us to the pit:
[*Low alarums.*
It is more worthy to leap in ourselves,
Than tarry till they push us. Good Volumnius,
Thou know'st that we two went to school together:
Even for that our love of old, I prithee,
Hold thou my sword-hilts, whilst I run on it.
*Vol.* That's not an office for a friend, my lord.
[*Alarum still.*
*Cli.* Fly, fly, my lord; there is no tarrying here.
*Bru.* Farewell to you; and you; and you, Volumnius.
Strato, thou hast been all this while asleep;
Farewell to thee too, Strato. Countrymen,
My heart doth joy that yet in all my life
I found no man but he was true to me.
I shall have glory by this losing day

More than Octavius and Mark Antony
By this vile conquest shall attain unto.
So fare you well at once; for Brutus' tongue
Hath almost ended his life's history:
Night hangs upon mine eyes; my bones would rest,
That have but labour'd to attain this hour.
[*Alarum. Cry Within*, 'Fly, fly, fly!'
*Cli.* Fly, my lord, fly.
*Bru.* Hence! I will follow.
[*Exeunt Clitus, Dardanius, and Volumnius.*
I prithee, Strato, stay thou by thy lord:
Thou art a fellow of a good respect;
Thy life hath had some smatch of honour in it:
Hold then my sword, and turn away thy face,
While I do run upon it. Wilt thou, Strato?
*Stra.* Give me your hand first. Fare you well, my lord.
*Bru.* Farewell, good Strato. [*Runs on his sword.*] Cæsar, now be still:
I kill'd not thee with half so good a will. [*Dies.*

*Alarum. Retreat. Enter* OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, MESSALA, LUCILIUS, *and the army.*

*Oct.* What man is that?
*Mes.* My master's man. Strato, where is thy master?
*Stra.* Free from the bondage you are in, Messala:
The conquerors can but make a fire of him;
For Brutus only overcame himself,
And no man else hath honour by his death.
*Lucil.* So Brutus should be found. I thank thee, Brutus,
That thou hast proved Lucilius' saying true.

46. *smatch*, taste.

*Oct.* All that served Brutus, I will entertain them.
Fellow, wilt thou bestow thy time with me?
*Stra.* Ay, if Messala will prefer me to you.
*Oct.* Do so, good Messala.
*Mes.* How died my master, Strato?
*Stra.* I held the sword, and he did run on it.
*Mes.* Octavius, then take him to follow thee,
That did the latest service to my master.
*Ant.* This was the noblest Roman of them all:
All the conspirators save only he
Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar;
He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world 'This was a man!'
*Oct.* According to his virtue let us use him,
With all respect and rites of burial.
Within my tent his bones to-night shall lie,
Most like a soldier, order'd honourably.
So call the field to rest; and let 's away,
To part the glories of this happy day. [*Exeunt.*

60. *entertain*, take into service.
71. *in a general honest thought*, out of honest regard for the common good.

# HAMLET,
# PRINCE OF DENMARK

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CLAUDIUS, king of Denmark.
HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present king.
POLONIUS, lord chamberlain.
HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.
LAERTES, son to Polonius.
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, OSRIC, A Gentleman, } courtiers.
A Priest.
MARCELLUS, BERNARDO, } officers.
FRANCISCO, a soldier.
REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.
Players.
Two Clowns, grave-diggers.
FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway.
A Captain.
English Ambassadors.

GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.
OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

Ghost of Hamlet's Father.

SCENE: *Denmark.*

# INTRODUCTION

*Hamlet*, the longest of Shakespeare's plays, was never printed, as it was certainly never performed, entire, in his own time. Our authentic text is derived from two early versions, each defective in certain points: viz. the Quarto of 1604 ($Q_2$), and the Folio of 1623. The title-page of the Quarto runs:— Early Editions.

THE | Tragicall Historie of | Hamlet, | *Prince of Denmarke.* | By William Shakespeare. | Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much | againe as it was, according to the true and perfect | Coppie. | At London, | Printed by I. R. for N. L., and are to be sold at his | shoppe under Saint Dunstons Church in | Fleet Street. 1604.

This is the more valuable of the two editions, and the *Hamlet* texts of the last generation have steadily approximated towards it. But the Folio of 1623 was printed from an independent MS. containing some new passages as well as dropping many old; and while its variations in phrase were rarely for the better, it was much more accurately printed.

Four Quartos followed that of 1604, each printed substantially from its immediate predecessor in 1605, 1611, *circa* 1611-1637, and 1637.

In addition to these authentic editions of the Shakespearean text, two rude versions of the *Hamlet* story exist, which stand in a close but enigmatic rela-

The First Quarto.

tion to it. The so-called 'First Quarto' of *Hamlet* was unknown until 1821, when Sir Henry Bunbury discovered a copy bound up with nine other old Shakespearean Quartos.[1] Its title-page runs:—

THE | Tragicall Historie of | HAMLET | *Prince of Denmarke* | By William Shake-speare. | As it hath been diverse times acted by his Highnesse ser-|uants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two V-|niversities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where. | At London printed for N. L. and John Trundell. | 1603.[2]

All critics agree that this 'First Quarto' was a pirated edition, surreptitiously put together from notes taken in the theatre. The great majority agree that the original, which it thus rudely reproduced, was not the very *Hamlet* printed 'according to the true and perfect copy' in the Second Quarto, but an earlier version of the story, which underwent a revision by Shakespeare before it became the definitive *Hamlet* we know.[3]

[1] It is now in the library of the Duke of Devonshire. In 1856 a needy student raised a shilling on a second copy, now in the British Museum. The two copies supplement each other, the first lacking the last page, the second the title-page. Facsimiles have been published by Timmins, Ashbee, and Griggs.

[2] Thus the text is little more than half as long as the Second Quarto text—2143 lines to 3719; a large part of this must be laid to the account of omission and mutilation. What havoc this wrought may be judged from such *disjecta membra* as the following:—

O my lord, the young Ofelia
Having made a garland of sundrie sortes of floures,
Sitting upon a willow by a brooke,
The enuious sprig broke, into the brooke she fell,
And for a while her clothes spread wide abroade
Bore the young Lady up: and there she sat smiling
Even mermaid-like, 'twixt heaven and earth, etc.

(Sc. xv.)

[3] The most decisive points of the evidence are: (1) the *divergent names*. For Polonius and Reynaldo we find in $Q_1$ Corambis and Montano; (2) an entire scene (xiv.) not found in $Q_2$; (3) the queen is somewhat differently conceived, and has a somewhat different rôle. She

In this earlier version itself, however, there is unmistakable evidence of Shakespeare's hand. Some of the profoundest things in *Hamlet* are absent; but many of his most pregnant and searching sayings are discernible, through a veil. On the other hand there are marks of altogether alien work.

*Der bestrafte Brudermord.*

Still more difficulty surrounds the German version of *Hamlet*, obtusely entitled, *Der bestrafte Brudermord*. It was first printed in 1781, from a MS. dated October 27, 1710. The language of the MS. is of the later seventeenth century, but the play itself undoubtedly belonged to the repertory of one or other of the bands of English players who entertained the courts and the cities of Germany from 1585 till far on into the war time, with their gross travesties of the masterpieces of the English stage. A good deal of Shakespearean poetry flashes amongst the wreckage of the First Quarto: here every ray is lost in an unbroken opacity of the vulgarest prose. It is possible, nevertheless, to see that the traducer operated upon a version of *Hamlet* identical neither with the First nor with the Second Quarto, but containing marks of both,—most probably the original text which the First Quarto attempted to reproduce.[1] The remarkable 'Prologus' in which 'Night' holds colloquy with the three Furies, and fires them on to vengeance upon the guilty king, has no known English original, but points, like much of the First Quarto text, to a pre-Shakespearean version of the *Hamlet* story.

solemnly protests her innocence of the murder, and joins with Horatio (in the scene referred to) and with Hamlet himself in plotting the revenge. In $Q_2$ she is more unequivocally 'frail': her guilt, though not established, is hinted, and while she sympathises with Hamlet she is far too helpless to conspire. Many other slighter differences may be passed by.

[1] Corambus (Creizenach, *Die Schauspiele der engl. Comödianten*, p. 134).

The lost *Hamlet*.

Of all the vanished plays of Elizabeth's time, the old or 'original' *Hamlet* is the most regrettable. A chorus of testimonies, from 1589 onwards, leave no doubt that there was such a play, but tell us little about it. The *locus classicus* is Nash's epistle prefixed to Greene's *Menaphon*, where he 'talks a little in friendship with a few of our triviall translators' to the following effect:—

'It is a common practice now-a-daies amongst a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every arte and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint* whereto they were borne, and busie themselves with the indevors of art, that could scarcelie latinize their necke-verse if they should have neede; yet English Seneca read by candle-light yeeldes manie good sentences, as *Bloud is a begger*, and so forth: and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will afoord you whole *Hamlets*, I should say handfulls, of tragical speaches. But O grief! *Tempus edax rerum*;—what 's that will last alwaies? The sea exhaled by drops will in continuance be drie; and Seneca, let bloud line by line, and page by page, at length must needs die to our stage: which makes his famisht followers to imitate the Kidde in *Æsop*, who enamored with the Foxes newfangles, forsooke all hopes of life to leape into a new occupation, and these men renouncing all possibilities of credit or estimation, to intermeddle with Italian translations,' etc.

The *Hamlet* thus in existence before 1590 was repeatedly played between 1590 and 1600;[1] and the melodramatic catchword, 'Hamlet, Revenge,' clung

[1] Henslowe records in his Diary under June 9, 1594, 'Rd. at hamlet. viijs.' He does not mark it as a new play. Lodge in his *Wits' Misery* (1596) records a trait of this or a later performance: '[Hate Virtue is] a foul lubber, and looks as pale as the wisard of the ghost, which cried so miserably at the theator, like an oyster-wife, *Hamlet revenge*.'

to the popular memory for years after it had been superseded in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.[1] Even the entry of Shakespeare's play in the Stationers' Register, July 26, 1602, 'a booke called the Revenge of Hamlett,' probably betrays the dominance of the old version and the conception of the action which it had ingrained.

These meagre data make it probable that the old *Hamlet* was a tragedy of vengeance, strongly tinged with Senecan rhetoric, and set in motion, like Seneca's *Thyestes* and *Agamemnon*, by the appeal of the wronged man's ghost to his kin. Nash's acrid innuendoes, further, leave little doubt that the author was Thomas Kyd, on whose name, like Jonson, he condescends to pun. Kyd's father apparently belonged to the 'trade of Noverint,' and his *Spanish Tragedy* betrays just that 'prentice knowledge of Seneca which Nash brands in the old *Hamlet*.[2] There are speeches stuffed with Senecan reminiscences, and the whole action unfolds itself at the bidding of a ghost. But the play is in no sense antique: Elizabethan love of bustling action runs riot in the crowded plot. The chorus, the sentiments, and the messengers' reports are but classic embroidery somewhat incongruously pieced on to a garment of English homespun by a playwright who read his Seneca in English and 'by candle-light.'[3]

Kyd.

[1] 'My name's Hamlet revenge,' says Captain Tucca in Dekker's *Satiromastix*, 'thou hast been at Paris garden, hast not? (1602). The phrase is played upon also in *Westward Hoe* (1607), and Rowland's *Night Raven* (1618).

[2] The phrase 'Bloud is a beggar,' which Nash quotes from the old *Hamlet*, has a parallel in a sentence from a tract of Kyd's: 'Bloud is an inceasant crier in the eares of the Lord. Sarrazin, *Anglia*, xiii. 124. Armin's 'There are, as Hamlet says, things called whips in store' (*Nest of Ninnies*, 1608), may rest upon a confusion with *The Spanish Tragedy*, where this often-parodied phrase occurs, but at least shows that the two plays were classed together.

[3] Cf. R. Fischer, *Zur Kunstentwicklung der engl. Tragödie*, p. 94 f.

*The Spanish Tragedy* had, then, unmistakable affinities with the old *Hamlet*, and enables us to conjecture with tolerable clearness the shape which the legendary tale of *Hamlet* took in his hands.

Saxo's *Amleth*.

Even as told by Saxo, in the earliest extant version, the legend of *Hamlet* probably owes something to the genius of Rome. Saxo Grammaticus (*i.e.* 'the Lettered'), perhaps the most brilliant Latinist of the twelfth century, wrote his *History of the Danes* in evident emulation of the sumptuous and sonorous manner of Livy.[1] In what precise form he found the legend we cannot tell; but in his pages Amlothi, the sea-giant who looms vaguely in a phrase of the Edda, tossing the white beach-pebbles like meal from his 'mill,' has become a Northern counterpart of the Livian Brutus who expelled the Tarquins. Like Brutus he feigns madness or 'folly' to save his life, and his feigning is the mainspring of the whole intrigue.[2] The usurper Feng (*Claudius*), whose crimes are told at length, tries to entrap him into confession by a series of devices. A girl is thrown in his way; a crafty old counsellor listens unseen to his talk with his mother; finally he is sent to England with two guards and secret orders for his death. Amleth's craft everywhere triumphs: he keeps the saving veil of eccentricity before the maiden, kills the eavesdropping counsellor, and provides for his two guards the death to which they were leading him. After winning the daughter of the king of England he returns, slays the tyrant, justifies his deed in an oration to the assembled people, and is chosen

[1] Cf. Mr. O. Elton's valuable Appendix to his translation of the First Nine Books of Saxo.

[2] As is well known, the 'simpleton' Amleth took root in the Scandinavian mind and languages. 'The king clapped his hands together and laughed, just as if he were an Amblode,' *den intet god forstode*, runs an old Swedish rhyme quoted by Vigfusson, *s.v.* 'amlóð.'

king. He is no sooner crowned than he has to cope with the machinations of his father-in-law, and marries a second wife, the 'Amazon' Hermentrude, by whose treachery he himself finally falls.

Probable Character of the lost *Hamlet*.

Out of this rambling *History of Hamlet* the old playwright made his Tragedy of Revenge by a process somewhat as follows. He added the ghost, whose summons spurs Hamlet to the revenge which Saxo's Amleth conceives unaided. The ghost probably told the story of his own death, which, in a play like *King Leir*, would have been visibly set forth. The tragedy certainly ended with the accomplishment of vengeance, and Hamlet, like Hieronymo, shared his victim's doom. It was assuredly not reserved to Shakespeare to silence the superfluous sequel. Moreover, if the summons to revenge opened the play and the act of revenge closed it, Hamlet necessarily 'delayed'; and the example of Hieronymo suggests that he already cried out at his own tardiness, already saw the phantom of the dead chiding his 'lapse in time and passion,'[1] was already stung with shame to see others do (like the Player and Fortinbras) what he neglects:—

> See, see, O see thy shame, Hieronymo!
> See here a loving father to his son. . . .

Hieronymo entraps his victims by a play, and the earlier Hamlet probably used a device familiar long before Shakespeare, to catch the conscience of the king.[2]

[1] Hieronymo in his wildness takes the old man, who has also lost a son, for his dead Horatio, and bursts out:—

> Art thou not come, Horatio, from the depth
> To ask for justice in this upper earth,
> To tell thy father thou art unreveng'd . . .
> To plague Hieronymo that is remiss,
> And seeks not vengeance for Horatio's death?

We are brought very near Hamlet's conscience-stricken cry:—

> Do you not come your tardy son to chide? . . .

[2] It is plausibly suggested that the idea originated in the well-known anecdote told in the

In 1585-86 English players performed in the Kronborg at Helsingör. It is probable that their impressions and reports were already reflected in the old *Hamlet;* that Saxo's Juteland had already become Shakespeare's Elsinore; that Hamlet's attendants were already called Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.[1]

Evidence of the German *Hamlet* and the First Quarto.

Finally, there is a good deal of evidence for holding that the old *Hamlet*, like *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Solimon and Perseda*, opened with a symbolical dialogue between the supernatural contrivers of the harms,—the original, in fact, of that remarkable 'Prologus' of the *Bestrafte Brudermord*. The brief, fierce debate between Hecate and the Furies is foreshadowed in the dumb show of *Gorbodric* (Act IV.), where the Furies, 'daughters of the night,' move with their whips and snakes across the stage. No classical *motif* died harder in English tragedy; but for it, probably, the weird sisters themselves would have looked less like Furies than they do, and been less closely allied to Hecate.[2] Of the action of the play the Prologue says little, but its allusive hints fall in with our other indications of the pre-Shakespearean drama. The king's incestuous marriage is to be punished with discord. 'Mingle poison in their spousal and jealousy in their hearts!' cries Hecate. Such a queen naturally became the secret ally of the avenger, like Bell' Imperia in *The Spanish Tragedy*, and this conception

*Warning for Fair Women*, and glanced at in *Hamlet* (ii. 2. 617), of the woman at Lynn who had murdered her husband:—

And sitting to behold a tragedy . . .
Wherein a woman that had murthered hers
Was ever haunted with her husband's ghost, . . .
She was so moved with the sight thereof
As she cried out the play was made by her [about her],
And openly confess her husband's murder.

[1] ii. 1077-1087.

[2] Sarrazin (*Anglia*, xiii. 121) thinks that these scenes in *Macbeth* were influenced by the original of the Prologue itself.

of Gertrude still lingers, as we have seen in the First Quarto, when she vows complicity with Hamlet:—

> I will conceale, consent and doe my best,
> What stratagem soe'er thou shalt devise.

She echoes the very phrases of Bell' Imperia:—

> Hieronymo, I will consent, conceale; . . .
> *Hier.* On then, whatsoever I devise
> Let me entreat you, grace my practices.

It is hard to resist the evidence of such passages that in the earliest version of *Hamlet* fragments at least of the lost *Hamlet* remain embedded.[1] Probably the whole of the scene between the queen and Horatio (xi.) omitted in the final versions is such a fragment.[2]

We may conclude then that the old play already presented the rough-hewn framework of the action of *Hamlet*, with hints of Ophelia and Polonius, perhaps of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and some pregnant suggestions of Hamlet himself. If *Hamlet* is the most individual of all Shakespeare's works, if it is penetrated with the personal accent beyond any other dramatic utterance of man, it probably owes even less than usual—less certainly than *Macbeth* or *Lear*—to inventive construction of plot. But Shakespeare's supreme power of wholly transforming the spiritual complexion of a tale while leaving its material form almost intact, is nowhere so wonderfully seen.

[1] This view has been urged with great force and learning by Sarrazin in the article already quoted (*Anglia*, xiii. 117 f.).

[2] Such a fragment too is the king's sentiment in $Q_1$ (Sc. ii. 4, 7):—

> None lives on earth but hee is borne to die,

almost an echo of Kyd's version of Garnier's *Cornélie*:—

> And whatsoever lives is sure to die.
> (Hazl. *Dodsl.* v. 199.)

Shakespeare transferred this 'vacant chaff, well meant for grain,' to his queen, whose ambiguous neutrality it aptly conveyed.

The spiritual complexion of the Shakespearean *Hamlet* is, in its last nuances, beyond analysis. Its far-reaching affinities with the mind of other times are charged with the most vivid suggestions of its own; its universality is full of local colour; its local colour penetrated with ideal gleams.

Date of Shakespeare's work on Hamlet.

Outer evidence points clearly to 1601 as the date of the text imperfectly represented in the First Quarto. On July 26, 1602, this text was entered in the Stationers' Register. The allusions in this text to the 'travelling' of the players and to its cause, correspond to the known situation of Shakespeare's own company during the previous year. We know that they 'travelled' towards the end of the year, playing, among other places, at Cambridge, and performing, among other pieces, the newly-finished *Hamlet*,—which the edition of 1603 announced as having been diverse times acted by the Company in the two Universities. We know also that, before they travelled, the Children of the Chapel on the private stages had become formidable competitors of the public stage. And it would seem that this competition must have become formidable to the Globe Company later than September 29, 1600, when Burbage, its manager, leased the Blackfriars Theatre to Evans, the *régisseur* of the Children.[1]

In the authentic 1604 Quarto the sarcastic description of the Children is cut out, and the travelling ascribed vaguely to a late 'innovation.' The fact that Shakespeare's fellow-actors printed both versions together in the Folio goes to show that the second is only a more formal reference to the same circumstance as the first.

To trace any inner connexion between *Hamlet* and Shakespeare's history is less easy. Nothing that

[1] Cf. W. Hall Griffin, *Hamlet*, p. xxi.

we know of Shakespeare's personal history really explains the startling and sudden intensity of personal accent in *Hamlet*, or the changed outlook upon the world which here first becomes apparent. His father's death in 1601, the execution of Essex and imprisonment of Southampton early in the same year, may have lent fervour to Hamlet's outbursts of grief and of friendship. Montaigne's *Essays*, in Florio's excellent English, may have contributed to the speculative subtlety of his speech. But these things carry us little way towards explaining *Hamlet*. A deep inward convulsion is no doubt revealed in the *Sonnets*. But we are not at liberty to see in the world-weariness of Hamlet a direct reflexion of the 'hell of time'[1] which Shakespeare suffered from his branded name and his friend estranged, or to hear the echo of Shakespeare's cry for restful death[2] in Hamlet's 'To be, or not to be.' The evidence rather tends to show that when Shakespeare unlocked his heart in these bitter verses his imagination was bodying forth the joyous comedy of Falstaff or Fluellen. What is clear is that Shakespeare had himself lived through all the desolation that he makes Hamlet express; but it is when experience has subsided into a vibrating memory that it becomes stuff for drama. And *Hamlet* is not the only reflexion of this mood. From about 1600 to 1604 Shakespeare shows a disposition to draw, with a peculiar acerbity, pictures of corrupt cities and courts, and with a peculiar sympathy, always touched with irony, the thinking and feeling men whom the spectacle of such societies turns into cynics or satirists, plunges into despondence or goads to reform. Jaques pierces the body of court and city with shafts of choice invective, discharged with curious and self-conscious art. The duke in *Measure for Measure* is

[1] *Sonnet* cxxiv. [2] *Sonnet* lxvi.

bent upon healing his plague-stricken city, but has not the nerve to apply the cauterising iron. Brutus, with sterner resolve but less insight, heroically strikes the blow and perishes amidst the ruin he has wrought. It is not difficult to imagine how the elements of ineffectual idealism here detached may have gathered in Shakespeare's mind about the character of the Danish prince, who even in the Saga had loitered towards his deed of death, and loved his motley somewhat too well. Transferred to a modern society, as polished on the surface as Brutus' Rome, and as corrupt at the core as the duke's Vienna, new possibilities opened for the legend of the tardy avenger. A brain solely occupied with the business of avenging a particular crime becomes a highly-strung organism acutely sensitive to every harmony of civil refinement, and every jar of moral discord. He sees his personal wrongs on a background of general corruption. Everything in *Hamlet* converges upon Hamlet, and his complex animosity to evil is thrown into relief by the elementary vindictiveness of his antitypes Fortinbras and Laertes,—Shakespeare's own extraordinarily effective additions to the legend. Fortinbras is not without a trace of Hamlet's nobleness, or Laertes of his accomplishment. But neither has any thought save of personal vengeance. Hamlet's shafts of invective glance aside from the king to the whole society of which the king is the type. He brings that society to the bar of an idealism as lofty and noble as Brutus', and riddles its pretensions with a poignancy which Jaques cannot approach. His dream of the greatness of man—'infinite in faculty, in action like an angel, in apprehension like a god'—is a Humanist counterpart of the austere Stoic sense of human dignity which nerves the dagger of Brutus against the supposed tyranny of Cæsar. And all the brilliant culture

of Humanism, which we rather presume than recognise in Jaques,—its wit, its various dexterity, its delight in the stage,—are mirrored in his incomparably vivid speech. But his intellect and passion are mysteriously involved in his doom. Brutus' abstract faith in man carries him resolutely to ruin without suffering disillusion; Hamlet's bitter penetration shatters the very bases of that exalted dream, and disillusion paralyses resolve. If he sees the world as an unweeded garden, it is because he alone has eyes for the fretted canopy of heaven. But amid all his pessimism, 'art still has truth'; man is a 'quintessence of dust,' but the next moment he is giving a genial welcome to the strolling players, somewhat as Jaques forgets his melancholy in the delightful discovery of Touchstone. It is not for nothing that he is made the mouthpiece of Shakespeare's ripest convictions about the art of playing; for he wears his own disguise with something of the player's zest, and is allured away from his purpose by the intellectual fascination of his rôle.

The Brutus and the Jaques types are as it were promontories in the sea of Hamlet: promontories which, if not 'sterile,' yet do not carry us within sight of shore. A mysterious residuum always remains, and the history of the attempts to solve it approaches in intellectual fascination, and exceeds in intellectual value, the task of solution itself. Three generations have seen their own philosophic and racial idiosyncrasies in the elusive mirror of Hamlet. To the humanity of Goethe he was a pure and lovely nature; to the speculative idealism of Coleridge the problem lay in his over-reflecting intellect; to the Hegelian religiosity of Ulrici, in his tender conscience; to Schopenhauer, in his world-weariness. With the reaction from the philosophies of pure thought and from the old Germany of pure thinkers, new Hamlets

have arisen, whose difficulties lie in their 'spleen' (Hermann Grimm), their 'temperament' (Gessner), or their 'sluggish blood' (Loening); or in the restraints imposed by external sanctions of law and politics. If modern psychology lives in Loening's 'lazy Hamlet,' the political Teuton of to-day is reflected in Werder's scornful 'dismissal' of the dreamer Hamlet to limbo in company with the dreaming Germany of which Freytag proclaimed him the type. Finally, to the 'realistic' eyes of our time Hamlet has become a veiled allusion, and his spiritual profile an ineffectual disguise, for Essex,[1] Montaigne, or James the First.

[1] This is the contention of Hermann Conrad in a series of elaborate articles recently reprinted in his *Shakspere's Selbstbekenntnisse*, 1897.

# HAMLET,

# PRINCE OF DENMARK

## ACT I.

### SCENE I. *Elsinore. A platform before the castle.*

FRANCISCO *at his post. Enter to him* BERNARDO.

*Ber.* Who 's there?

*Fran.* Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

*Ber.* Long live the king!

*Fran.* Bernardo?

*Ber.* He.

*Fran.* You come most carefully upon your hour.

*Ber.* 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

*Fran.* For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

*Ber.* Have you had quiet guard?

*Fran.* Not a mouse stirring.

*Ber.* Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,

The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

*Fran.* I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who 's there?

*Enter* HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS.

*Hor.* Friends to this ground.

*Mar.* And liegemen to the Dane.

*Fran.* Give you good night.

*Mar.* O, farewell, honest soldier: Who hath relieved you?

*Fran.* Bernardo has my place. Give you good night. [*Exit.*

*Mar.* Holla! Bernardo!

*Ber.* Say, What, is Horatio there?

*Hor.* A piece of him.

*Ber.* Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.

*Mar.* What, has this thing appeared again tonight?

*Ber.* I have seen nothing.

*Mar.* Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy, And will not let belief take hold of him Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us: Therefore I have entreated him along With us to watch the minutes of this night; That if again this apparition come, He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

*Hor.* Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

*Ber.* Sit down awhile; And let us once again assail your ears, That are so fortified against our story What we have two nights seen.

*Hor.* Well, sit we down,

13. *rivals*, partners.
29. *approve*, confirm the evidence of.

And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.
*Ber.* Last night of all,
When yond same star that 's westward from the pole
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

*Enter* Ghost.

*Mar.* Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!
*Ber.* In the same figure, like the king that 's dead.
*Mar.* Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.
*Ber.* Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.
*Hor.* Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.
*Ber.* It would be spoke to.
*Mar.* Question it, Horatio.
*Hor.* What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!
*Mar.* It is offended.
*Ber.* See, it stalks away!
*Hor.* Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!
[*Exit Ghost.*
*Mar.* 'Tis gone, and will not answer.
*Ber.* How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:
Is not this something more than fantasy?

42. *a scholar*, i.e. one.

What think you on't?
*Hor.* Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.
*Mar.* Is it not like the king?
*Hor.* As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armour he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded pole-axe on the ice.
'Tis strange.
*Mar.* Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.
*Hor.* In what particular thought to work I know not;
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.
*Mar.* Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,

57. *avouch*, warrant.
62. *parle*, parley.
63. *the sledded pole-axe*, the 'pole-axe weighted with a sledge or hammer at the back.' Malone proposed 'Polacks,' *i.e.* the Poles in their sledges; which many editors adopt. But there is little doubt that, as the advocates of 'pole-axe' urge, the tenor of the description suggests a momentary outburst of fury rather than a prolonged fight. The chief difficulty in this view is the word 'sledded.' 'Sled' is a dialectic and archaic form for 'sledge' the vehicle (that which slides), but no other example is known of its use for 'sledge' a hammer (that which slogs), the former *sledge* itself probably owing its unetymological palatal to confusion with the latter. But this very confusion tends to justify our assigning to 'sledded' here the proper meaning of 'sledged.'
65. *jump*, just.
68. *in the gross and scope of my opinion*, the general purport of my view is (that).
72. *toils*, makes to toil.

And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:
Who is't that can inform me?
*Hor.* That can I;
At least the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet—
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him—
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compáct,
Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant
And carriage of the article design'd,
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't; which is no other—

74. *mart*, traffic.
87. *by law and heraldry*, by the code of chivalry as well as of civil law.
89. *seized of*, possessed of.
90. *a moiety competent*, an equivalent slice of territory.
91. *gaged*, pledged.
94. *carriage of the article design'd*, tenor of the agreement drawn up.
96. *unimproved*, not turned to account. $Q_1$ has 'inapproved,' untried.
100. *That hath a stomach in't*, that promises adventure.

As it doth well appear unto our state—
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost: and this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.
*Ber.* I think it be no other but e'en so:
Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars.
*Hor.* A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:
. . . . . .
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:
And even the like precurse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates

101. *state*, rulers.

103. *compulsatory;* scan 'compulsat'ry.'

106. *head*, occasion.

107. *romage*, bustle.

108-125. These two speeches are omitted in Ff.

109. *sort*, agree (with that explanation).

117. The assumption that a line has dropped out, best explains the evidently incoherent grammar of this line. It must have referred in general terms to the portents which v. 117 proceeds to exemplify. [In Plutarch the comet and eclipse of the sun *follow* Cæsar's death; he does not mention an eclipse of the moon. Cf. North in Shaksp. Libr. p. 188. L.]

118. *Disasters*, ominous signs, probably an eclipse.

120. *almost to doomsday*, i.e. almost to the point of complete darkness, alluding to the biblical prophecy that at the second coming of Christ 'the moon shall not give her light' (Matt. xxiv. 29).

121. *precurse*, portent.

And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.—
But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

*Re-enter* Ghost.

I 'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me:
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me:
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
Speak of it: stay, and speak! [*The cock crows.*]
Stop it, Marcellus.

*Mar.* Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

*Hor.* Do, if it will not stand.

*Ber.* 'Tis here!

*Hor.* 'Tis here!

*Mar.* 'Tis gone! [*Exit Ghost.*

We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

*Ber.* It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

*Hor.* And then it started like a guilty thing

123. *omen*, the calamity portended.
125. *climatures*, dwellers in the same 'climate' or region.
127. *I'll cross it;* to cross the path of a spirit was to become subject to its malign influence.
134. *happily*, haply.
140. *partisan*, halberd.

Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

*Mar.* It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

*Hor.* So have I heard and do in part believe it
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:
Break we our watch up; and by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

*Mar.* Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently.

[*Exeunt.*

154. *extravagant and erring*, wandering beyond its set limits.

155. *confine*, appointed domain.

162. *strike*, blast with malignant influence.

163. *takes*, strikes the limbs with fever or paralysis.

166. *russet*, gray.

SCENE II. *A room of state in the castle.*

*Enter the* KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND. CORNELIUS, Lords, *and* Attendants.

*King.* Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,—
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleagued with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting:

9. *jointress*, joint possessor. 10. *defeated*, marred, disfigured.

Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
His further gait herein; in that the levies,
The lists and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject: and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king, more than the scope
Of these dilated articles allow.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

*Cor.* } In that and all things will we show our
*Vol.* } duty.

*King.* We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.
[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*

And now, Laertes, what 's the news with you?
You told us of some suit; what is 't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

*Laer.* My dread lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France

38. *dilated*, set out at large. Ff have 'delated,' an Elizabethan spelling of the same word. Others have connected it with the genuine though rare 'delate,' convey.

And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.
*King.* Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?
*Pol.* He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.
*King.* Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—
*Ham.* [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind.
*King.* How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
*Ham.* Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.
*Queen.* Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.
*Ham.* Ay, madam, it is common.
*Queen.* If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?
*Ham.* Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not 'seems.'

56. *pardon*, permission of absence.

65. *A little more than kin, and less than kind;* their relationship is nearer than mere kinship, yet devoid of kindness. There may be a further, more sinister, suggestion that their relation is 'against kind,' *i.e.* 'incestuous.'

67. *too much i' the sun;* an allusion to the proverb: 'Out of God's blessing into the warm sun,' which, whatever its origin, implied passing into an inferior condition. 'Ex equis ad asinos' is equated with it by Ray. There is also a play on 'son.'

70. *vailed*, drooping.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within which passeth show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

*King.* 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father:
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what we know must be and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd; whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father: for let the world take note,

92. *obsequious*, (almost) by the associations of 'obsequies.' funereal. The word is habitually coloured in Shakespeare

95. *incorrect*, unsubdued.

You are the most immediate to our throne;
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son,
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire:
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

*Queen.* Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

*Ham.* I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

*King.* Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Flourish. Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

*Ham.* O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

112. *impart;* probably there is a change of construction, the sentence ending as if it had begun with 'And no less nobility of love.'

113. *to school in Wittenberg.* The University or 'high school' of Wittenberg, founded in 1502, was for the play-going public above all the scene of the 'tragical life and death of Dr. Faustus.' To Protestant England at large it was the university of Luther. To a few cultivated Englishmen, including, it is just possible, Shakespeare himself, it was associated with Giordano Bruno, who lectured there for three years after his sojourn in England.

114. *retrograde,* contrary.

125. *Denmark,* i.e. the king.

127. *rouse,* health.

129. *too too,* an emphatic reduplication of 'too,' frequently used.

His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on 't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on 't—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears:—why she, even she—
O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules: within a month:
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post

134. *uses*, customary occupations, familiar routine.

137. *merely*, wholly.

140. *Hyperion*, the Titanic Sun-god.

141. *beteem*, suffer.

149. *Niobe*, a daughter of Tantalus, turned by the vengeance of Apollo and Artemis into a stone on Mount Sipylus in Lydia, 'where she sheds tears all the summer long.

150. *discourse of reason*, reasoning power. 'Discourse' denotes, technically, the process of passing from premises to a conclusion.

With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good:
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

*Enter* HORATIO, MARCELLUS, *and* BERNARDO.

*Hor.* Hail to your lordship!
*Ham.* I am glad to see you well:
Horatio,—or I do forget myself.
*Hor.* The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
*Ham.* Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?
Marcellus?
*Mar.* My good lord?
*Ham.* I am very glad to see you. [*To Ber.*] Good even, sir.
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?
*Hor.* A truant disposition, good my lord.
*Ham.* I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.
*Hor.* My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
*Ham.* I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
*Hor.* Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.
*Ham.* Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked-meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

182. *dearest*, deadliest.

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father!—methinks I see my father.
*Hor.* Where, my lord?
*Ham.* In my mind's eye, Horatio.
*Hor.* I saw him once; he was a goodly king.
*Ham.* He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.
*Hor.* My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
*Ham.* Saw? who?
*Hor.* My lord, the king your father.
*Ham.* The king my father!
*Hor.* Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.
*Ham.* For God's love, let me hear.
*Hor.* Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,

198. *the dead vast*, the silent void. So $Q_1$; $Q_2$ $F_1$ have 'wast,' the later Ff 'waste.' But 'vast of night' is a Shakespearean phrase (cf. *Temp.* i. 2. 327).
200. *at point exactly*, at all points.
205. *act*, action upon them, effect.

The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.
*Ham.* But where was this?
*Mar.* My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.
*Ham.* Did you not speak to it?
*Hor.* My lord, I did;
But answer made it none: yet once methought
It lifted up it head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.
*Ham.* 'Tis very strange.
*Hor.* As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.
*Ham.* Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?
*Mar.* } We do, my lord.
*Ber.* }
*Ham.* Arm'd, say you?
*Mar.* } Arm'd, my lord.
*Ber.* }
*Ham.* From top to toe?
*Mar.* } My lord, from head to foot.
*Ber.* }
*Ham.* Then saw you not his face?
*Hor.* O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.
*Ham.* What, look'd he frowningly?
*Hor.* A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.
*Ham.* Pale or red?
*Hor.* Nay, very pale.
*Ham.* And fix'd his eyes upon you?
*Hor.* Most constantly.

*Ham.* I would I had been there.
*Hor.* It would have much amazed you.
*Ham.* Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?
*Hor.* While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.
*Mar.* } Longer, longer.
*Ber.* }
*Hor.* Not when I saw't.
*Ham.* His beard was grizzled,—no?
*Hor.* It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.
*Ham.* I will watch to-night;
Perchance 'twill walk again.
*Hor.* I warrant it will.
*Ham.* If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.
*All.* Our duty to your honour.
*Ham.* Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.
[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*
My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. [*Exit.*

## Scene III. *A room in Polonius' house.*

*Enter* Laertes *and* Ophelia.

*Laer.* My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.
*Oph.* Do you doubt that?
*Laer.* For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;
No more.
*Oph.* No more but so?
*Laer.* Think it no more:
For nature crescent does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will: but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth:
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body

6. *a toy in blood*, a passing caprice.
7. *primy*, spring-like.
9. *suppliance*, entertainment.
11. *crescent*, growing.
15. *cautel*, duplicity.
21. *safety* (three syllables).

Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:
The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

*Oph.* I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.

*Laer.* O, fear me not.
I stay too long: but here my father comes.

*Enter* POLONIUS.

A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

40. *buttons*, buds. 51. *rede*, counsel.

*Pol.* Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!
And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou charácter. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comráde. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,
Bear 't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are of a most select and generous, chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true,

59. *character*, inscribe.

65. *comrade;* Shakespeare accentuates the word on either syllable.

71. *express'd in fancy*, tricked out with ornaments.

74. *Are of a most select and generous, chief in that.* This line remains a crux. Shakespeare certainly did not write it as it stands, but the most suspicious word in it—'chief'—is supported by the joint testimony of all three texts ($Q_1$ $Q_2$ $F_1$). Collier's 'choice' for 'chief' gives a fair sense, but is not convincingly Shakespearean. '*Are most select and generous, chief in that,*' is a clumsy makeshift, and '*Are most select and generous in that*' (Grant White) a Gordian simplification. [Interpret: 'Are of a most select and generous (apparel); foremost in that.' L.]

And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!
*Laer.* Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.
*Pol.* The time invites you; go; your servants tend.
*Laer.* Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well
What I have said to you.
*Oph.* 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.
*Laer.* Farewell. [*Exit.*
*Pol.* What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?
*Oph.* So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.
*Pol.* Marry, well bethought:
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:
If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution, I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth.
*Oph.* He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.
*Pol.* Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?
*Oph.* I do not know, my lord, what I should think.
*Pol.* Marry, I 'll teach you: think yourself a baby;

94. *put on me*, impressed on me.

That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus—you 'll tender me a fool.
*Oph.* My lord, he hath importuned me with love
In honourable fashion.
*Pol.* Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.
*Oph.* And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.
*Pol.* Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,
Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,
The better to beguile. This is for all:
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment leisure,

107. *Tender*, regard, care for.
109. *Running;* Collier's emendation for Qq 'wrong,' Ff 'roaming.'
115. *woodcocks.* This bird was proverbial for simplicity.
117. *Lends*, gives.
127. *brokers*, go-betweens.
128. *investments*, vestments.
129. *implorators*, implorers.
133. *moment leisure*, moment's leisure.

As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to 't, I charge you: come your ways.
*Oph.* I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE IV. *The platform.*

*Enter* HAMLET, HORATIO, *and* MARCELLUS.

*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.
*Hor.* It is a nipping and an eager air.
*Ham.* What hour now?
*Hor.* I think it lacks of twelve.
*Mar.* No, it is struck.
*Hor.* Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.
[*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off within.*
What does this mean, my lord?
*Ham.* The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.
*Hor.* Is it a custom?
*Ham.* Ay, marry, is 't:
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west

2. *eager*, sharp.
8. *wake*, hold revel.
9. *up-spring*, a boisterous German dance ('Hüpfauf').
11. *kettle-drum*; this instrument was then characteristic of Denmark.
16. *More honour'd in the breach than the observance*, better to break than observe.

Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth,—wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin—
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausive manners, that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—
Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo—
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt

19. *with swinish phrase*, by calling us swine.

20. *addition*, title.

22. *attribute*, reputation.

27. *complexion*, natural disposition.

29. *o'erleavens the form of plausive manners*, countermines the charm of engaging ways.

32. *nature's livery, or fortune's star*, a blemish they were born with, or one wrought by mischance. 'Star' has been understood of a mark, such as the star in a horse's brow. But the collocation with 'fortune' favours the astrological sense; the malign influence being put for the 'defect' it induces.

36. *the dram of eale*, etc. The general sense of this disputed passage is plainly: the slight infusion of base quality discredits the entire substance, incurring thereby the greater reproach. But neither 'eale' nor 'of a doubt' has yet been satisfactorily amended or explained. 'Eale' can very well be a spelling of 'e'il' (evil); but the phraseology certainly suggests some more concrete and graphic word. 'Of a doubt' can hardly be right; the most ingenious explanation of it is Corson's 'the dram of ill *doth substance* (i.e. imbues) the noble with doubt.' The most plausible emendations are 'often dout,' 'oft adoubt.'

To his own scandal.

*Hor.* Look, my lord, it comes!

*Enter* Ghost.

*Ham.* Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I 'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
Why thy canónized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again, in cómplete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[*Ghost beckons Hamlet.*

*Hor.* It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

*Mar.* Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground:
But do not go with it.

43. *questionable*, question-compelling.

47. *canonized*, consecrated (by burial according to the rites of the Church).

53. *glimpses*, glimmering light.

54. *we fools of nature . . . to shake.* The embarrassed syntax reflects Hamlet's agitation. 'We . . . nature' impulsively anticipates 'our.'

*Hor.* No, by no means.
*Ham.* It will not speak ; then I will follow it.
*Hor.* Do not, my lord.
*Ham.* Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee ;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again : I 'll follow it.
*Hor.* What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? think of it :
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.
*Ham.* It waves me still.
Go on ; I 'll follow thee.
*Mar.* You shall not go, my lord.
*Ham.* Hold off your hands.
*Hor.* Be ruled ; you shall not go.
*Ham.* My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I 'll make a ghost of him that lets me!

65. *fee*, value.
73. *deprive your sovereignty of reason*, dethrone your reason.
75. *toys of desperation*, desperate fatuities of impulse.
83. *the Nemean lion*, strangled by Hercules, all his weapons proving futile against its tough hide. Shakespeare had perhaps heard descriptions of Mantegna's pictures at Mantua of the feats of Hercules (cf. Sarrazin, *J. B.* xxxi. 175).
83. *nerve*, muscle.
85. *lets*, hinders.

I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.
[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*

*Hor.* He waxes desperate with imagination.

*Mar.* Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

*Hor.* Have after. To what issue will this come?

*Mar.* Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

*Hor.* Heaven will direct it.

*Mar.* Nay, let's follow him. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE V. *Another part of the platform.*

*Enter* GHOST *and* HAMLET.

*Ham.* Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

*Ghost.* Mark me.

*Ham.* I will.

*Ghost.* My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

*Ham.* Alas, poor ghost!

*Ghost.* Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

*Ham.* Speak; I am bound to hear.

*Ghost.* So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

*Ham.* What?

*Ghost.* I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid

6. *bound*, ready.

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand an end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—
*Ham.* O God!
*Ghost.* Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.
*Ham.* Murder!
*Ghost.* Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.
*Ham.* Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.
*Ghost.* I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death

19. *an end*, on end.

20. *porpentine*, porcupine.

21. *eternal blazon*, disclosure of things eternal.

33. *Lethe wharf*, the banks of the infernal river Lethe, which produced oblivion in those who drank of it, and hence (as Shakespeare feigns) 'dulness' in the 'fat weeds' it fed. The idea may have been caught from Seneca's description of the 'slumbrous' *yew* which overhung Lethe: 'Taxo imminente, quam tenet segnis sopor' (cf. Sarrazin, *Angl.* xiii. 130).

37. *process*, narrative.

Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.
*Ham.* O my prophetic soul!
My uncle!
*Ghost.* Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,—
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!
But virtue, as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect

40. *my prophetic soul.* Cf. i. 2. 255, 'I doubt some foul play.'

59. *orchard*, garden.

62. *hebenon*, probably either (1) henbane, or (2) yew. In favour of (1) is Pliny's description of the oil of henbane, 'which, if it be but dropped into the eares is ynough to trouble the brain' (*Nat. Hist.* xxv. 4; in Holland's translation, 1601). In favour of (2) is the use of 'heben' for a tough wood, and the ascription to yew of the power of curdling the blood. Qq have 'hebona,' Ff 'hebenon.'

Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled,
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head:
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven,
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me. [*Exit.*

*Ham.* O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;

68. *posset*, clot.
69. *eager*, acid.
71. *tetter*, cutaneous scab or scurf.
77. *Unhousel'd*, without having received the Eucharist.
77. *disappointed*, unequipped, unprepared.
77. *unaneled*, without the last unction.
83. *luxury*, lust.

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond recórds,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!
My tables,—meet it is I set it down,
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:
[*Writing.*
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;
It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'
I have sworn 't.

*Mar.* } [*Within*] My lord, my lord!
*Hor.* }

*Enter* HORATIO *and* MARCELLUS.

*Mar.* Lord Hamlet!
*Hor.* Heaven secure him!
*Ham.* So be it!
*Hor.* Illo, ho, ho, my lord!
*Ham.* Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.
*Mar.* How is 't, my noble lord?

97. *globe*, head.

100. *pressures*, impressions.

112. *Enter Horatio and Marcellus.* The arrangement here follows $Q_2$, and is supported by $Q_1$. Capell first transferred the stage direction 'Enter . . . Marcellus' to v. 116. Horatio and Marcellus call after him in the dark.

116. *Hillo, ho, ho;* Hamlet imitates the falconer's call to his hawk.

*Hor.* What news, my lord?
*Ham.* O, wonderful!
*Hor.* Good my lord, tell it.
*Ham.* No; you will reveal it.
*Hor.* Not I, my lord, by heaven.
*Mar.* Nor I, my lord.
*Ham.* How say you, then; would heart of man once think it?
But you 'll be secret?
*Hor.* } Ay, by heaven, my lord.
*Mar.* }
*Ham.* There 's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he 's an arrant knave.
*Hor.* There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.
*Ham.* Why, right; you are i' the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:
You, as your business and desire shall point you;
For every man has business and desire,
Such as it is; and for my own poor part,
Look you, I 'll go pray.
*Hor.* These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.
*Ham.* I 'm sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.
*Hor.* There 's no offence, my lord.
*Ham.* Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,

136. *by Saint Patrick.* If the oath has any point at all, St. Patrick is probably referred to as the 'keeper of Purgatory' (he is so called by Dekker), and hence as taking cognisance of unexpiated crimes.

It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.
*Hor.* What is 't, my lord? we will.
*Ham.* Never make known what you have seen to-night.
*Hor.* } My lord, we will not.
*Mar.* }
*Ham.* Nay, but swear 't.
*Hor.* In faith,
My lord, not I.
*Mar.* Nor I, my lord, in faith.
*Ham.* Upon my sword.
*Mar.* We have sworn, my lord, already.
*Ham.* Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.
*Ghost.* [*Beneath*] Swear.
*Ham.* Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, truepenny?
Come on—you hear this fellow in the cellarage—
Consent to swear.
*Hor.* Propose the oath, my lord.
*Ham.* Never to speak of this that you have seen,
Swear by my sword.
*Ghost.* [*Beneath*] Swear.
*Ham.* Hic et ubique? then we 'll shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Never to speak of this that you have heard,
Swear by my sword.
*Ghost.* [*Beneath*] Swear.
*Ham.* Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast?

141. *soldiers* (three syllables). 150. *truepenny*, honest fellow.

A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.
*Hor.* O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!
*Ham.* And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
But come;
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on,
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we would,'
Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they might,'
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me: this not to do,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
Swear.
*Ghost.* [*Beneath*] Swear.
*Ham.* Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [*They swear.*]
So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you:
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do, to express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together. [*Exeunt.*

163. *pioner*, digger, miner.
172. *antic*, odd, fantastic.
174. *encumber'd*, folded.
178. *giving out*, profession.

## ACT II.

### SCENE I. *A room in Polonius' house.*

*Enter* POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO.

*Pol.* Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.
*Rey.* I will, my lord.
*Pol.* You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behaviour.
*Rey.* My lord, I did intend it.
*Pol.* Marry, well said; very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense; and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it:
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;
As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,
And in part him:' do you mark this, Reynaldo?
*Rey.* Ay, very well, my lord.
*Pol.* 'And in part him; but' you may say 'not well:
But, if 't be he I mean, he 's very wild;
Addicted so and so:' and there put on him

7. *Danskers*, Danes.
8. *keep*, dwell.
10. *encompassment and drift* (='drift of circumstance,' iii. 1. 1), indirect approach, 'beating about the bush.'

What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him; take heed of that;
But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.
*Rey.* As gaming, my lord.
*Pol.* Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
Drabbing: you may go so far.
*Rey.* My lord, that would dishonour him.
*Pol.* 'Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency;
That 's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.
*Rey.* But, my good lord,—
*Pol.* Wherefore should you do this?
*Rey.* Ay, my lord,
I would know that.
*Pol.* Marry, sir, here 's my drift;
And I believe it is a fetch of wit:
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,
Mark you,
Your party in convérse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured

29. *another scandal . . . incontinency.* Polonius insists, 'suo more,' upon a verbal distinction.
31. *quaintly,* artfully.
34. *unreclaimed,* untamed.
35. *Of general assault,* to which all men are subject.
38. *a fetch of wit,* a cunning device. So Qq. Ff 'a fetch of warrant.'

He closes with you in this consequence;
'Good sir,' or so, or 'friend,' or 'gentleman,'
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country.

*Rey.* Very good, my lord.

*Pol.* And then, sir, does he this—he does—
what was I about to say? By the mass, I was
about to say something: where did I leave?

*Rey.* At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend
or so,' and 'gentleman.'

*Pol.* At 'closes in the consequence,' ay, marry;
He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman;
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you
say,
There was a' gaming: there o'ertook in 's rouse;
There falling out at tennis:' or perchance,
'I saw him enter such a house of sale,'
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.
See you now;
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlasses and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out:
So by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

45. *closes with you in this consequence*, in such terms as these.

47. *addition*, title.

55. *He closes;* so Qq. Ff 'he closes with you'; and so Camb. edd. But the Quarto reading is more characteristic. Polonius recovers his thought, but not the phrase with which he had introduced it, and naïvely adopts Reynaldo's blundering report of what he had said.

58. *o'ertook in 's rouse* (a euphemism), 'seized with drunkenness.'

65. *windlasses*, circuitous methods.

65. *assays of bias*, roundabout attempts. 'Bias' was a term in the game of bowls. The bowl, being leaded at one side, travelled in a curve, and hence had to be aimed away from the point which it was intended to hit.

*Rey.* My lord, I have.
*Pol.* God be wi' you; fare you well.
*Rey.* Good my lord!
*Pol.* Observe his inclination in yourself.
*Rey.* I shall, my lord.
*Pol.* And let him ply his music.
*Rey.* Well, my lord.
*Pol.* Farewell! [*Exit Reynaldo.*

*Enter* OPHELIA.

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?
*Oph.* O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!
*Pol.* With what, i' the name of God?
*Oph.* My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.
*Pol.* Mad for thy love?
*Oph.* My lord, I do not know,
But truly, I do fear it.
*Pol.* What said he?
*Oph.* He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,

71. *in yourself*, with your own eyes (as well as by report).

80. *down-gyved to his ancle*, hanging in folds about his ancle like a fetter.

He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being: that done, he lets me go:
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their helps,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

*Pol.* Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

*Oph.* No, my good lord, but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me.

*Pol.* That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgement
I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifle
And meant to wreck thee; but beshrew my jealousy!
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:
This must be known; which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love. [*Exeunt.*

102. *ecstasy*, insanity.

112. *quoted*, observed.

115. *cast beyond ourselves*, go astray in our speculations.

118, 119. *being kept close*, etc. The consequences of concealing Hamlet's love might be more unpleasant, Polonius thinks, than the immediate anger likely to follow its discovery. The conceit which perplexes the construction of the last half-line may have been suggested by the wish for a rhyming couplet at the close of the scene; it is, however, characteristic of Polonius' turn for 'foolish figures' (ii. 2. 98).

## Scene II. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* King, Queen, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, *and* Attendants.

*King.* Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so call it,
Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and haviour,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time: so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That open'd lies within our remedy.

*Queen.* Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile,
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

1. *Rosencrantz, Guildenstern.* On these names, see Introduction.

2. *Moreover that*, besides that.

*Ros.* Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

*Guil.* But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

*King.* Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

*Queen.* Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz:
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

*Guil.* Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him!

*Queen.* Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and some Attendants.*

*Enter* POLONIUS.

*Pol.* The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

*King.* Thou still hast been the father of good news.

*Pol.* Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king:
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath used to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

*King.* O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

*Pol.* Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.
*King.* Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in. [*Exit Polonius.*
He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.
*Queen.* I doubt it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.
*King.* Well, we shall sift him.

*Re-enter* POLONIUS, *with* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS.

Welcome, my good friends!
Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?
*Volt.* Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: whereat grieved,
That so his sickness, age and impotence
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,
And his commission to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack:
With an entreaty, herein further shown,
[*Giving a paper.*

56. *the main*, the obvious master-fact in the situation.
61. *Upon our first*, on our first application.
67. *borne in hand*, beguiled.
73. *three thousand*; so $F_1$. $Q_2$ has 'three-score thousand.'

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise,
On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down.

*King.* It likes us well;
And at our more consider'd time we 'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour:
Go to your rest; at night we 'll feast together:
Most welcome home!

[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*

*Pol.* This business is well ended.
My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief: your noble son is mad:
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,
What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.

*Queen.* More matter, with less art.

*Pol.* Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him then: and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause:
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.

79. *regards of safety and allowance*. safe and allowable conditions.
86. *expostulate*, discuss at large.
87. *What majesty should be*, how majesty should be defined.

Perpend.
I have a daughter,—have while she is mine,—
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise.
[*Reads.*
'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia,'—
That 's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus: [*Reads.*
'In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.'
*Queen.* Came this from Hamlet to her?
*Pol.* Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful. [*Reads.*
'Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.
'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.
'Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, HAMLET.'
This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means and place,
All given to mine ear.
*King.* But how hath she
Received his love?

108. *Hath given me this.* We must suppose Hamlet's letter to have been one of those received by Ophelia before she was required to 'repel' them (i. 3. 122); written, therefore, before the opening of the play, and unaffected by Hamlet's feigned eccentricity.

110. *beautified.* The term belonged to the fantastic vocabulary of amatory etiquette.

113. Elizabethan ladies wore a pocket in the fore-part of their stays, to which they consigned their more confidential correspondence.

123. *this machine,* this bodily frame.

*Pol.* What do you think of me?
*King.* As of a man faithful and honourable.
*Pol.* I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing—
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me—what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think? No, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;
This must not be:' and then I prescripts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repulsed, a short tale to make,
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.
*King.* Do you think this?
*Queen.* It may be, very like.
*Pol.* Hath there been such a time, I'd fain know that,
That I have positively said ''Tis so,'
When it proved otherwise?
*King.* Not that I know.

136. *table-book*, note-book. 'If I had silently noted these things.'
139. *round*, directly.
140. *bespeak*, address.
141. *out of thy star*, beyond thy sphere (a phrase likewise astrological in origin).
149. *lightness*, light-headedness.

*Pol.* [*Pointing to his head and shoulder*] Take this from this, if this be otherwise:
If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.
*King.* How may we try it further?
*Pol.* You know, sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.
*Queen.* So he does indeed.
*Pol.* At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:
Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter: if he love her not
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.
*King.* We will try it.
*Queen.* But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.
*Pol.* Away, I do beseech you, both away:
I'll board him presently.
[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*

*Enter* HAMLET, *reading.*

O, give me leave:
How does my good Lord Hamlet?
*Ham.* Well, God-a-mercy.
*Pol.* Do you know me, my lord?
*Ham.* Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

159. *the centre*, the earth's centre.

160. *four hours;* so Qq Ff. 'For hours' is a natural emendation; but 'four' was used colloquially for a vague number. Cf. 'forty thousand brothers,' v. 1. 292.

170. *Enter Hamlet, reading.* In $Q_1$ this immediately precedes the soliloquy of iii. 1.

174. *a fishmonger.* The term bore the cant sense of 'a seller of woman's chastity.'

*Pol.* Not I, my lord.

*Ham.* Then I would you were so honest a man.

*Pol.* Honest, my lord!

*Ham.* Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

*Pol.* That 's very true, my lord.

*Ham.* For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter?

*Pol.* I have, my lord.

*Ham.* Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing: but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't.

*Pol.* [*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he is far gone: and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I 'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord?

*Ham.* Words, words, words.

*Pol.* What is the matter, my lord?

*Ham.* Between who?

*Pol.* I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

*Ham.* Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to

182. *a good kissing carrion*, a carrion good for 'kissing,' *i.e.* breeding abundantly when 'kissed' by the sun. 'Ophelia is likewise "a good kissing carrion"; therefore let her not walk in the sun.' This is the reading of Qq Ff. Warburton's fascinating conjecture: 'a god kissing carrion,' has been almost universally adopted, and makes capital sense; but with all its neatness it is less pregnant than the original text.

have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

*Pol.* [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

*Ham.* Into my grave.

*Pol.* Indeed, that is out o' the air. [*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

*Ham.* You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life.

*Pol.* Fare you well, my lord.

*Ham.* These tedious old fools!

*Enter* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

*Pol.* You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

*Ros.* [*To Polonius*] God save you, sir! [*Exit Polonius.*

*Guil.* My honoured lord!

*Ros.* My most dear lord!

*Ham.* My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

*Ros.* As the indifferent children of the earth.

*Guil.* Happy, in that we are not over-happy; On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

*Ham.* Nor the soles of her shoe?

231. *indifferent*, ordinary.

*Ros.* Neither, my lord.

*Ham.* Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

*Guil.* 'Faith, her privates we.

*Ham.* In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What 's the news?

*Ros.* None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

*Ham.* Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

*Guil.* Prison, my lord!

*Ham.* Denmark 's a prison.

*Ros.* Then is the world one.

*Ham.* A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

*Ros.* We think not so, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

*Ros.* Why then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

*Ham.* O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

*Guil.* Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

*Ham.* A dream itself is but a shadow.

*Ros.* Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

244-276. *Let me . . . attended.* Only found in Ff.

252. *confines*, places of confinement.

*Ham.* Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

*Ros.* } We 'll wait upon you.
*Guil.* }

*Ham.* No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

*Ros.* To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

*Ham.* Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

*Guil.* What should we say, my lord?

*Ham.* Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour: I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

*Ros.* To what end, my lord?

*Ham.* That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by

269. *Then are our beggars bodies*, etc. If the ambitions are shadows, 'beggars'—the 'antitypes of ambition'—are substance, and as such throw shadow; it is Hamlet's caprice to identify the shadowy ambitious 'monarchs and outstretch'd heroes' with the 'beggars' shadows,'—a caprice which he impatiently dismisses the next moment: 'for, by my fay, I cannot reason.'

276. *dreadfully attended;* by his 'bad dreams.'

277. *in the beaten way of friendship*, to use the frank familiarity of a friend.

282. *too dear a halfpenny*, i.e. at a halfpenny.

the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

*Ros.* [*Aside to Guil.*] What say you?

*Ham.* [*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.—If you love me, hold not off.

*Guil.* My lord, we were sent for.

*Ham.* I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

*Ros.* My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

*Ham.* Why did you laugh then, when I said 'man delights not me'?

*Ros.* To think, my lord, if you delight not in

297. *proposer*, pleader.
305. *prevent your discovery*, forestall your disclosure of it.
317. *express*, full of expression.

man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer you service.

*Ham.* He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for 't. What players are they?

*Ros.* Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.

*Ham.* How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

*Ros.* I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

*Ham.* Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so followed?

*Ros.* No, indeed, are they not.

*Ham.* How comes it? do they grow rusty?

*Ros.* Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question,

329. *lenten*, meagre, like Lenten fare.

330. *coted*, came up with.

335. *the humorous man*, the 'character-part.'

336, 337. *the clown . . . the sere.* Only found in Ff.

337. *tickle o' the sere*, readily provoked to laughter (properly said of a musket in which the 'sere,' or trigger, was 'tickle'—easily moved).

346. *their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.* See Introduction.

352-379. *How comes it? . . . load too.* Omitted in Qq.

354. *aery*, 'nestful,' brood (properly of young hawks).

355. *eyases*, unfledged birds; properly, young hawks taken from the nest.

355. *cry out on the top of question*, declaim with their shrill treble louder than the topic in hand requires.

and are most tyrannically clapped for 't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.

*Ham.* What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

*Ros.* 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

*Ham.* Is 't possible?

*Guil.* O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

*Ham.* Do the boys carry it away?

*Ros.* Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

*Ham.* It is not very strange; for my uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

[*Flourish of trumpets within.*

357. *berattle*, abuse.
362. *escoted*, paid, maintained.
363. *the quality*, the profession of player.
372. *argument*, plot of a play.
378. *Hercules and his load too.* Hercules bearing the world for Atlas was the sign of the Globe, to which this is doubtless a covert allusion.

*Guil.* There are the players.

*Ham.* Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

*Guil.* In what, my dear lord?

*Ham.* I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

*Re-enter* POLONIUS.

*Pol.* Well be with you, gentlemen!

*Ham.* Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

*Ros.* Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

*Ham.* I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed.

*Pol.* My lord, I have news to tell you.

*Ham.* My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

*Pol.* The actors are come hither, my lord.

*Ham.* Buz, buz!

*Pol.* Upon mine honour,—

396. *mad north-north-west*, just touched with madness.

397. *handsaw* (heronshaw, hernsew), heron. The whole phrase is a proverb from falconry: 'When the wind is from the south I can tell a hawk from a heron'—the birds flying with the wind, the falconer could, without being dazzled by the sun, follow their flight.

402. *Happily*, haply.

412. *Buz, buz;* 'stale news!' 'connu!'

*Ham.* Then came each actor on his ass,—

*Pol.* The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

*Ham.* O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

*Pol.* What a treasure had he, my lord?

*Ham.* Why,

'One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.'

*Pol.* [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

*Ham.* Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

*Pol.* If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

*Ham.* Nay, that follows not.

*Pol.* What follows, then, my lord?

*Ham.* Why,

'As by lot, God wot,'

and then, you know,

'It came to pass, as most like it was,'—

the first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for look, where my abridgement comes.

*Enter four or five* Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am

418. *scene individable, or poem unlimited;* (probably) plays in which the unity of place is, or is not, observed.

420. *the law of writ and the liberty*, the regular (or classical) and the 'free' (romantic) methods of dramatic composition.

422. *Jephthah.* At least one ballad on the story was in existence. The lines quoted below are part of one stanza.

438. *row*, line.

439. *abridgement*, entertainment, pastime.

glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! thy face is valanced since I saw thee last: comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress! By 'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We 'll e'en to 't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see: we 'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

*First Play.* What speech, my good lord?

*Ham.* I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was —as I received it, and others, whose judgements in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affection; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: if it

442. *valanced*, fringed with a beard.

447. *chopine*, a high wooden shoe.

448. *cracked within the ring*. Coins ceased to be current when so cracked. Hamlet is, of course, addressing a boy.

462. *sallets* (salads, savoury herbs), piquancies.

464. *affection*, affectation. Ff 'affectation.'

466. *more handsome than fine*, rather intrinsically beautiful than showily adorned.

live in your memory, begin at this line: let me see, let me see;
'The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast,'—
it is not so: it begins with Pyrrhus:—
'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot
Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.'
So, proceed you.

*Pol.* 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

*First Play.* 'Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,

472. *th' Hyrcanian beast*, the tiger.

474 f. This speech resembles one in Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, where Æneas similarly relates to Dido the slaughter of Priam. But the resemblance is hardly that of parody. Shakespeare's speech is at once more bombastic and more splendid than Marlowe's (if his it be), and the bombast may best be explained, with Schlegel, as a deliberate attempt to distinguish the language of the play within the play from the dignified poetry of the play itself. There is little resemblance in detail; the only lines distinctly referred to are in the description of Pyrrhus' last struggle with Priam. Priam tries to grapple with him:—

Which he disdaining, whisked his sword about,
And with the wind whereof the king fell down.

Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
And like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.
But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region, so after Pyrrhus' pause
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.
Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends!'

*Pol.* This is too long.

*Ham.* It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee, say on: he 's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps: say on: come to Hecuba.

495. *Ilium*, Priam's palace in Troy.
506. *rack*, mass of clouds.
509. *the region*, the sky.
517. *fellies*, felloes.

*First Play.* 'But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen—'

*Ham.* 'The mobled queen?'

*Pol.* That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

*First Play.* 'Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced:
But if the gods themselves did see her then
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
Unless things mortal move them not at all,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.'

*Pol.* Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

*Ham.* 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

525. *mobled*, muffled.
529. *bisson rheum*, blinding tears.
531. *o'er-teemed*, worn out with child-bearing.
540. *milch*, flow.
548. *abstract*, epitomised.

*Pol.* My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

*Ham.* God's bodykins, man, much better: use every man after his desert, and who shall 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

*Pol.* Come, sirs.

*Ham.* Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. [*Exit Polonius with all the Players but the First.*] Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

*First Play.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

*First Play.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit First Player.*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are welcome to Elsinore.

*Ros.* Good my lord!

*Ham.* Ay, so, God be wi' ye; [*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*] Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting

566. *a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines.* If anywhere, these lines are doubtless to be found in the speech of Lucianus (iii. 2. 266 f.).

579. *conceit*, imagination.

With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.
Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
Ha!
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,

590. *free*, innocent.
591. *amaze*, bewilder, confuse.
594. *A . . . muddy-mettled rascal*, a sorry, spiritless wretch.
594. *peak*, sneak, play a contemptible part.
597. *property*, kingship.
598. *defeat*, destruction.
609. *kindless*, unnatural.

Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon 't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I 'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle: I 'll observe his looks;
I 'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me: I 'll have grounds
More relative than this: the play 's the thing
Wherein I 'll catch the conscience of the king.
[*Exit.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

*King.* And can you, by no drift of circumstance,

617. *I have heard*, etc. See Introduction.
633. *relative*, definite.
1. *drift of circumstance*, indirect, roundabout methods.

Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

*Ros.* He does confess he feels himself distracted;
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

*Guil.* Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

*Queen.* Did he receive you well?

*Ros.* Most like a gentleman.

*Guil.* But with much forcing of his disposition.

*Ros.* Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

*Queen.* Did you assay him
To any pastime?

*Ros.* Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: they are about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

*Pol.* 'Tis most true:
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

*King.* With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclined.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

13. *Niggard of question*, etc. This appears to invert the actual circumstances of the interview; but Rosencrantz is anxious to remove the impression which Guildenstern's irritated candour might well arouse, that the two friends from whose intimacy with Hamlet so much was hoped were already objects of his distrust.

17. *o'er-raught*, overtook.

*Ros.* We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

*King.* Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia:
Her father and myself, lawful espials,
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If 't be the affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

*Queen.* I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

*Oph.* Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen.*

*Pol.* Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia*] Read on this book;
That show of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,—
'Tis too much proved—that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

*King.* [*Aside*] O, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word:

31. *Affront*, encounter. 52. *to*, compared with.

O heavy burthen!

*Pol.* I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord. [*Exeunt King and Polonius.*

*Enter* HAMLET.

*Ham.* To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die: to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,

56. *To be, or not to be.* The purport of the question is explained by its expanded repetition in the next lines. It is not, as has been suggested, equivalent to: 'Is there a future life or not?'

59. *take arms against a sea of troubles.* 'To take up arms and rush upon the waves of the sea' was a custom attributed by several classical writers to the Celts. Shakespeare probably read of it in Fleming's translation of Ælian's *Histories* (1576), book xii., where it is said that 'they throw themselves into the fomey floudes with their swordes drawn in their handes, and shaking their javelines as though they were of force and violence to withstand the rough waves.'

65. *rub*, a metaphor from bowls.

67. *this mortal coil*, the turmoil of mortality.

68. *respect*, the consideration.

When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

*Oph.* Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?

*Ham.* I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

*Oph.* My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

*Ham.* No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

*Oph.* My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;
And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,

75. *quietus*, quittance (law term for the settlement of a reckoning).

76. *bare*, mere.

ib. *fardels*, burdens.

80. *No traveller returns*, i.e. (as Coleridge said) 'to his home or abiding-place.' The Ghost is not such a traveller.

83. *conscience*, speculative reflexion.

86. *pitch* (a term of falconry), height, importance. So Qq. Ff have 'pith,' an equally good reading.

89. *orisons*, prayers.

Take these again ; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

*Ham.* Ha, ha! are you honest?

*Oph.* My lord?

*Ham.* Are you fair?

*Oph.* What means your lordship?

*Ham.* That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

*Oph.* Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

*Ham.* Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

*Oph.* Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

*Ham.* You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

*Oph.* I was the more deceived.

*Ham.* Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe

103. *honest*, chaste.

108. *admit no discourse to*, i.e. permit no one to parley with. Ophelia understands: 'permit itself no discourse with.'

120. *of it*, i.e. of our old stock.

123. *indifferent*, tolerably.

none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where 's your father?

*Oph.* At home, my lord.

*Ham.* Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in 's own house. Farewell.

*Oph.* O, help him, you sweet heavens!

*Ham.* If thou dost marry, I 'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

*Oph.* O heavenly powers, restore him!

*Ham.* I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I 'll no more on 't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [*Exit.*

*Oph.* O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!

152. *make your wantonness your ignorance*, give an air of childlike innocence to your impure impulses.

162. *The observed of all observers*, the object of all men's courtly deference.

And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

*Re-enter* KING *and* POLONIUS.

*King.* Love! his affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There 's something in his soul,
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger: which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England,
For the demand of our neglected tribute:
Haply the seas and countries different
With variable objects shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on 't?

*Pol.* It shall do well: but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief: let her be round with him;
And I 'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,

180. *variable*, various.
183. *From fashion of himself*, from his usual demeanour.

To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

*King.* It shall be so:
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

[*Exeunt.*

## Scene II. *A hall in the castle.*

*Enter* Hamlet *and* Players.

*Ham.* Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it outherods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

*First Play.* I warrant your honour.

*Ham.* Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the

10. *periwig-pated.* Wigs were worn by actors.
13. *inexplicable*, meaningless.
15. *Termagant*, a supposed god of the Saracens, who frequently figured in the Mysteries, and was played, like Herod, another typical pagan, with boisterous and noisy rant.
22. *from*, contrary to.

purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

*First Play.* I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

*Ham.* O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready. [*Exeunt Players.*

27. *pressure*, impression.

28. *come tardy off*, feebly executed.

31. *allowance*, judgment.

39. *abominably*; the word was currently derived from 'ab homine'; hence the point of its use here.

50. $Q_1$ contains the following important additions to this character of the Elizabethan clowns. Like the previous passage it is printed as verse, but was clearly written as prose:

'And then you have some again, that keeps one suit | of jests, as a man is known by one suit of | apparell, and gentlemen quotes his jests down | in their tables, before they come to the

*Enter* POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

*Pol.* And the queen too, and that presently.

*Ham.* Bid the players make haste. [*Exit Polonius.*] Will you two help to hasten them?

*Ros.* } We will, my lord.
*Guil.* }

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

*Ham.* What ho! Horatio!

*Enter* HORATIO.

*Hor.* Here, sweet lord, at your service.

*Ham.* Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal. 60

*Hor.* O, my dear lord,—

*Ham.* Nay, do not think I flatter;
For what advancement may I hope from thee
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits,
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?
No, let the candied tongue lick ábsurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election

play, as thus: | "Cannot you stay till I eat my porridge?" and "You owe me | a quarter's wages"; and "My coat wants a cullison"; | and "Your beer is sour"; and blabbering with his lips, | and thus keeping in his cinque-pace of jests, | when God knows the warm clown cannot make a jest | unless by chance, as the blind man catches a hare; | Masters, tell him of it.'

60. 'As I ever had intercourse with.'

65. *candied*, i.e. 'honeyed,' hypocritical.

66. *pregnant*, prompt, facile.

67. *thrift*, profit.

Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those
Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death:
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle: if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgements join
In censure of his seeming.

*Hor.* Well, my lord:
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

*Ham.* They are coming to the play; I must be idle:
Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter* KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and others.*

*King.* How fares our cousin Hamlet?

84. 'With thy most concentrated attention.'

95. *I must be idle;* i.e. I must resume my 'antic disposition.'

*Ham.* Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed capons so.

*King.* I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

*Ham.* No, nor mine now. [*To Polonius*] My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

*Pol.* That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

*Ham.* What did you enact?

*Pol.* I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

*Ham.* It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?

*Ros.* Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

*Queen.* Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

*Ham.* No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

*Pol.* [*To the King*] O, ho! do you mark that?

*Ham.* Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

[*Lying down at Ophelia's feet.*

*Oph.* No, my lord.

*Ham.* I mean, my head upon your lap?

*Oph.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Do you think I meant country matters?

*Oph.* I think nothing, my lord.

*Ham.* That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

*Oph.* What is, my lord?

*Ham.* Nothing.

98. *the chameleon's dish*, i.e. air; on which the chameleon was said to live.

109. *i' the Capitol.* This erroneous tradition then belonged to the popular legend of Cæsar's death, and had been adopted by Shakespeare himself in *Julius Cæsar*.

*Oph.* You are merry, my lord.

*Ham.* Who, I?

*Oph.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

*Oph.* Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

*Ham.* So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I 'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there 's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by 'r lady, he must build churches, then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.'

*Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters.*

*Enter a* King *and a* Queen *very lovingly; the* Queen *embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head*

138. *a suit of sables*, a suit trimmed with sable. Such suits were often of bright-coloured (scarlet or saffron) cloth, and thence not accounted mourning.

144. '*For, O, for, O,*' etc., the burden of a popular song.

145. *The dumb-show enters.* The dumb-show was a relic of the Moralities, introduced in several of the earlier court dramas, and hence in keeping with the play it ushers in. Commonly, however, it merely (as in *Gorboduc*) symbolised the coming action, instead of literally rehearsing it as here. In thus as it were doubling his 'mouse-trap,' Hamlet may have thought that he doubled his chance of catching the conscience of the king. It is no doubt surprising that the king does not already rise and break off the play, or that, after being thus warned, so consummate an actor cannot control himself at the crucial moment. He must, doubtless, be supposed to blench, and Hamlet's 'miching mallecho' sounds the first note of guarded triumph.

*upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the* King's *ears, and exit. The* Queen *returns; finds the* King *dead, and makes passionate action. The* Poisoner, *with some two or three* Mutes, *comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The* Poisoner *wooes the* Queen *with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.* [*Exeunt.*

*Oph.* What means this, my lord?

*Ham.* Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

*Oph.* Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

*Enter* Prologue.

*Ham.* We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

*Oph.* Will he tell us what this show meant?

*Ham.* Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

*Oph.* You are naught, you are naught: I'll mark the play.

*Pro.* For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently. [*Exit.*

*Ham.* Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

*Oph.* 'Tis brief, my lord.

*Ham.* As woman's love.

147. *miching mallecho,* skulking mischief.

*Enter two* Players, King *and* Queen.

*P. King.* Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

*P. Queen.* So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:
For women's fear and love holds quantity,
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is sized, my fear is so:
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

*P. King.* 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do:
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

*P. Queen.* O, confound the rest!

165. *cart*, chariot.

175. *distrust you*, fear for you.

177. *holds quantity*, keep their relative proportion, vary together. This is the reading of Ff. Qq have for this single line:—

For women fear too much, even as they love,
And women's fear and love holds quantity.

Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.
*Ham.* [*Aside*] Wormwood, wormwood.
*P. Queen.* The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love:
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.
*P. King.* I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity:
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;
But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy:
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;
The poor advanced make friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,

192. *instances*, motives.
193. *respects of thrift*, considerations of interest.
207. *enactures*, resolutions.

And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contráry run
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:
So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

*P. Queen.* Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

*Ham.* If she should break it now!

*P. King.* 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile;
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [*Sleeps.*

*P. Queen.* Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain! [*Exit.*

*Ham.* Madam, how like you this play?

*Queen.* The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

*Ham.* O, but she'll keep her word.

*King.* Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in 't?

*Ham.* No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' the world.

*King.* What do you call the play?

*Ham.* The Mouse-trap. Marry, how! Tropic-

219. *seasons*, ripens, matures.
229. *anchor*, anchorite.
230. *opposite*, rebuff, adversity.

ally. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what o' that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not: let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

*Enter* LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

*Oph.* You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

*Ham.* I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

*Oph.* You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

*Ham.* It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

*Oph.* Still better, and worse.

*Ham.* So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer; pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

*Luc.* Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.
[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears.*

249. *Gonzago is the duke's name.* Gonzago was the family name of the dukes of Mantua. There are several slight indications of Shakespeare's acquaintance with Mantuan affairs (cf. Sarrazin, *J.B.* xxix. xxx. 249 f.).

249. *his wife, Baptista.* Though properly masculine, this name was also given in Italy to women.

255. *chorus,* interpreter of the plot.

257. *the puppets;* carrying on the notion of a dumb-show, in which Ophelia and her lover would be represented.

262. *So you must take your husbands,* i.e. 'for better and worse.'

*Ham.* He poisons him i' the garden for 's estate. His name 's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

*Oph.* The king rises.

*Ham.* What, frighted with false fire!

*Queen.* How fares my lord?

*Pol.* Give o'er the play.

*King.* Give me some light: away! 280

*All.* Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.*

*Ham.* Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;
For some must watch, while some must sleep:
So runs the world away.
Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me—with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

*Hor.* Half a share. 290

*Ham.* A whole one, I.
For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very—pajock.

*Hor.* You might have rhymed.

*Ham.* O good Horatio, I 'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

287. *turn Turk*, change for the worse; 'go to the bad.'

288. *Provincial roses*, rosettes resembling the damask rose, called 'provincialis' (from Provins, near Paris).

288. *razed*, slashed.

289. *fellowship*, partnership.

ib. *cry*, company (said primarily of a pack of hounds, then of a troupe of players).

295. *pajock*, peacock. Irving's by-play at this point may be recalled. Hamlet's eye falls as he speaks upon Ophelia's fan of peacock feathers, with which he has been trifling: 'Pajock,' he cries, as if by a sudden inspiration, and tosses it away.

*Hor.* Very well, my lord.

*Ham.* Upon the talk of the poisoning?

*Hor.* I did very well note him.

*Ham.* Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!

For if the king like not the comedy,
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.
Come, some music!

*Re-enter* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

*Guil.* Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

*Ham.* Sir, a whole history.

*Guil.* The king, sir,—

*Ham.* Ay, sir, what of him?

*Guil.* Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

*Ham.* With drink, sir?

*Guil.* No, my lord, rather with choler.

*Ham.* Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

*Guil.* Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

*Ham.* I am tame, sir: pronounce.

*Guil.* The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

*Ham.* You are welcome.

*Guil.* Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

303. *the recorders;* a kind of flageolet.
305. *perdy,* 'pardieu.'

*Ham.* Sir, I cannot.

*Guil.* What, my lord?

*Ham.* Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,—

*Ros.* Then thus she says; your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

*Ham.* O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

*Ros.* She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

*Ham.* We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

*Ros.* My lord, you once did love me.

*Ham.* So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

*Ros.* Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

*Ham.* Sir, I lack advancement.

*Ros.* How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

*Ham.* Ay, sir, but, 'While the grass grows,'—the proverb is something musty.

*Re-enter* Players *with recorders.*

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with you:—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

339. *admiration*, wonder.

346. *trade*, business.

348. *these pickers and stealers*, these hands.

362. *toil*, net.

*Guil.* O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

*Ham.* I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

*Guil.* My lord, I cannot.

*Ham.* I pray you.

*Guil.* Believe me, I cannot.

*Ham.* I do beseech you.

*Guil.* I know no touch of it, my lord.

*Ham.* 'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

*Guil.* But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

*Ham.* Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

*Re-enter* POLONIUS.

God bless you, sir!

*Pol.* My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

363, 364. An incoherent apology to the effect that his unmannerly boldness is prompted by his sense of duty, and therefore compatible with his love.

388. *fret*, annoy; with an allusion to the musical sense of a 'stop.'

*Ham.* Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

*Pol.* By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

*Ham.* Methinks it is like a weasel.

*Pol.* It is backed like a weasel.

*Ham.* Or like a whale?

*Pol.* Very like a whale.

*Ham.* Then I will come to my mother by and by. They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

*Pol.* I will say so.

*Ham.* By and by is easily said. [*Exit Polonius.*] Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:
Let me be cruel, not unnatural:
I will speak daggers to her, but use none;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;
How in my words soever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

[*Exit.*

## SCENE III. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* KING, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

*King.* I like him not, nor stands it safe with us

400. *by and by*, at once.
412. *The soul of Nero.* Nero killed his mother Agrippina.

To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you ;
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you :
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.

*Guil.* We will ourselves provide :
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your majesty.

*Ros.* The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armour of the mind
To keep itself from noyance ; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest
The lives of many. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw
What 's near it with it : it is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

*King.* Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage ;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

*Ros.* } We will haste us.
*Guil.* }

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

*Enter* POLONIUS.

*Pol.* My lord, he 's going to his mother's closet :
Behind the arras I 'll convey myself,

5. *estate*, royal authority.
20. *mortised*, joined with a mortise, 'dove-tailed.'

To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him home:
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege:
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

*King.* Thanks, dear my lord.
[*Exit Polonius.*

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will:
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what 's in prayer but this two-fold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,

30. *as you said.* Polonius astutely (or obliviously) attributes his own suggestion to the king.

33. *of vantage*, from a point of vantage.

And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can: what can it not?
Yet what can it when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
All may be well. [*Retires and kneels.*

*Enter* HAMLET.

*Ham.* Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I 'll do 't. And so he goes to heaven;
And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread;
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No!
Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:

75. *would be scann'd*, calls for scrutiny.
83. 'So far as we can judge by inference.'
88. *hent*, opportunity.

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in 't;
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit.*

*King.* [*Rising*] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.
[*Exit.*

## SCENE IV. *The Queen's closet.*

*Enter* QUEEN *and* POLONIUS.

*Pol.* He will come straight. Look you lay home to him:
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I 'll sconce me even here.
Pray you, be round with him.

*Ham.* [*Within*] Mother, mother, mother!

*Queen.* I 'll warrant you,
Fear me not: withdraw, I hear him coming.
[*Polonius hides behind the arras.*

*Enter* HAMLET.

*Ham.* Now, mother, what 's the matter?

*Queen.* Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

2. *broad*, outrageous.

*Ham.* Mother, you have my father much offended.

*Queen.* Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

*Ham.* Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

*Queen.* Why, how now, Hamlet!

*Ham.* What 's the matter now?

*Queen.* Have you forgot me?

*Ham.* No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And—would it were not so!—you are my mother.

*Queen.* Nay, then, I 'll set those to you that can speak.

*Ham.* Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

*Queen.* What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!

*Pol.* [*Behind*] What, ho! help, help, help!

*Ham.* [*Drawing*] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!
[*Makes a pass through the arras.*

*Pol.* [*Behind*] O, I am slain! [*Falls and dies.*

*Queen.* O me, what hast thou done?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not:
Is it the king?

*Queen.* O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

*Ham.* A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

*Queen.* As kill a king!

*Ham.* Ay, lady, 'twas my word.
[*Lifts up the arras and discovers Polonius.*
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff,
If damned custom have not brass'd it so
That it be proof and bulwark against sense.

*Queen.* What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

*Ham.* Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths; O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

*Queen.* Ay me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

*Ham.* Look here, upon this picture, and on this,

38. *sense*, feeling.

42. *takes off the rose*, etc. An allusion to the practice of branding harlots in the forehead.

49. *this solidity*, etc., the earth.

52. *in the index*, in the mere preliminary indication. The index, in Shakespeare's time, was prefixed to the book.

53. *Look here, upon this picture, and on this.* It has been doubted whether Hamlet here points to two portraits hung on the walls or takes a miniature of his father from his pocket. Irving and Salvini even suppose the pictures to be drawn only to the imagination. That the Elizabethans understood actual paintings of considerable size may probably be gathered from the German version, where Hamlet says: '*Aber sehet, dort in jener Gallerie hängt das Conterfait Eures ersten Ehegemahls, und da hängt das Conterfait des itzigen*' (iii. 5.).

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love; for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgement: and what judgement
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
Else could you not have motion; but sure, that sense
Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserved some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,

72. *motion*, emotion.
72. *sense*, perceptive sensibility. In 71, 72 the emotional aspect of the word is prominent, in 72, 73 the intellectual.

If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,
Since frost itself as actively doth burn
And reason pandars will.

*Queen.* O Hamlet, speak no more:
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.

*Ham.* Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty,—

*Queen.* O, speak to me no more;
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears;
No more, sweet Hamlet!

*Ham.* A murderer and a villain;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precédent lord; a vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!

*Queen.* No more!

*Ham.* A king of shreds and patches,—

*Enter* Ghost.

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

*Queen.* Alas, he 's mad!

*Ham.* Do you not come your tardy son to chide,

90. *grained*, indelibly dyed.
92. *enseamed*, defiled.
98. *a vice of kings*, a clown of a king.
102. *A king of shreds and patches;* i.e. in motley; carrying on the allusion to the Vice or Clown.

That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!
*Ghost.* Do not forget: this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul:
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:
Speak to her, Hamlet.
*Ham.* How is it with you, lady?
*Queen.* Alas, how is 't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Start up, and stand an end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?
*Ham.* On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me;
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects: then what I have to do
Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood.
*Queen.* To whom do you speak this?
*Ham.* Do you see nothing there?
*Queen.* Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.
*Ham.* Nor did you nothing hear?
*Queen.* No, nothing but ourselves.

114. *Conceit*, imagination.
121. *bedded*. The adjective is suggested by the image of the recumbent soldiers.
121. *excrements*, outgrowth, especially the hair and nails.
127. *make capable*, endow with sensibility.
129. *My stern effects*, the deed he had to accomplish.

*Ham.* Why, look you there! look, how it steals
away!
My father, in his habit as he lived!
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!
[*Exit Ghost.*

*Queen.* This is the very coinage of your brain:
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

*Ham.* Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what 's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;
For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

*Queen.* O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in
twain.

*Ham.* O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,

153. *pursy*, short-winded (as with excessive corpulence).
155. *curb*, bend.
161. *all sense*, all sensibility to sin.

That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either . . . . the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night:
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,
I 'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,
[*Pointing to Polonius.*
I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind:
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.
*Queen.* What shall I do?
*Ham.* Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed;
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;
For who, that 's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,

169. *either . . . . the devil.* Qq have 'either the devil.' A word has clearly dropped out; probably 'lay,' 'quell,' or the like.

190. *gib*, tom-cat.

Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

*Queen.* Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

*Ham.* I must to England; you know that?

*Queen.* Alack,
I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

*Ham.* There 's letters seal'd: and my two schoolfellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;
For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar: and 't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.
This man shall set me packing:
I 'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.
Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.
Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; Hamlet dragging in Polonius.*

194. *like the famous ape.* The story alluded to is not otherwise known.

195. *To try conclusions*, to see what will happen.

203. *fang'd*, having fangs

207. *petar*, petard, mortar.

211. *packing*, plotting (with a play upon the other sense, to be off quickly).

## ACT IV

### SCENE I. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN.

*King.* There 's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves:
You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son?

*Queen.* Bestow this place on us a little while.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*
Ah, mine own lord, what have I seen to-night!

*King.* What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

*Queen.* Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, 'A rat, a rat!'
And in this brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.

*King.* O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there:
His liberty is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd and out of haunt,
This mad young man: but so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit;

*Sc. 1.* In time this scene closely follows iii. 4.

11. *brainish*, illusory.
18. *out of haunt*, apart.

But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

*Queen.* To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

*King.* O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

*Re-enter* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*
Come, Gertrude, we 'll call up our wisest friends;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
And what 's untimely done . . . . .
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air. O, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay. [*Exeunt.*

26. *mineral*, mine.

40. Some words are lost. Capell's 'So, haply, slander, doubtless expresses their purport. Ff omit 41-44 'whose . . . air.'

42. *blank*, mark; properly the white mark in the centre of a butt.

SCENE II. *Another room in the castle.*

*Enter* HAMLET.

*Ham.* Safely stowed.

*Ros.* } [*Within*] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!
*Guil.* }

*Ham.* But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet? O, here they come.

*Enter* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN.

*Ros.* What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

*Ham.* Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

*Ros.* Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence And bear it to the chapel.

*Ham.* Do not believe it.

*Ros.* Believe what?

*Ham.* That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what replication should be made by the son of a king?

*Ros.* Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

*Ham.* Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end: he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

*Ros.* I understand you not, my lord.

19. *like an ape;* so Ff. Qq 'like an apple,' a reading little inferior. $Q_1$ 'like an ape doth nuts,' which is adopted by Singer.

*Ham.* I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

*Ros.* My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

*Ham.* The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

*Guil.* A thing, my lord?

*Ham.* Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Another room in the castle.*

*Enter* KING, *attended.*

*King.* I have sent to seek him, and to find the body,
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
He 's loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgement, but their eyes;
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all.

*Enter* ROSENCRANTZ.

How now! what hath befall'n?

*Ros.* Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

*King.* But where is he?

32. *Hide fox, and all after*, a cry said to be used in the game of 'hide and seek.' The fox is Polonius, and Hamlet joins in the chase.

9. *Deliberate pause*, the result of a deliberate plan.

*Ros.* Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

*King.* Bring him before us.

*Ros.* Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

*Enter* HAMLET *and* GUILDENSTERN.

*King.* Now, Hamlet, where 's Polonius?

*Ham.* At supper.

*King.* At supper! where?

*Ham.* Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table: that 's the end.

*King.* Alas, alas!

*Ham.* A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

*King.* What dost thou mean by this?

*Ham.* Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

*King.* Where is Polonius?

*Ham.* In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

*King.* Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants.*

*Ham.* He will stay till you come.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*

*King.* Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—

21-23. There is a punning allusion to the Diet of Worms.

28, 29. Probably pure mystification.

Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee hence
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
The associates tend, and every thing is bent
For England.

*Ham.* For England!

*King.* Ay, Hamlet.

*Ham.* Good.

*King.* So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

*Ham.* I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for England! Farewell, dear mother.

*King.* Thy loving father, Hamlet.

*Ham.* My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England! [*Exit.*

*King.* Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:
Away! for every thing is seal'd and done
That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.
[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*
And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught—
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us—thou mayst not coldly set
Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
By letters congruing to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.
[*Exit.*

62. *cicatrice*, scar. 65. *process*, mandate.

## Scene IV. *A plain in Denmark.*

*Enter* Fortinbras, *a* Captain, *and* Soldiers, *marching.*

*For.* Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;
Tell him that by his license Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promised march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye;
And let him know so.
*Cap.* I will do 't, my lord.
*For.* Go softly on.
[*Exeunt Fortinbras and Soldiers.*

*Enter* Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, *and others.*

*Ham.* Good sir, whose powers are these?
*Cap.* They are of Norway, sir.
*Ham.* How purposed, sir, I pray you?
*Cap.* Against some part of Poland.
*Ham.* Who commands them, sir?
*Cap.* The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.
*Ham.* Goes it against the main of Poland, sir.
Or for some frontier?
*Cap.* Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole

9-66. Omitted in Ff.
15. *the main*, the country at large.
20. *farm it*, take it on lease.

A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.
*Ham.* Why, then the Polack never will defend it.
*Cap.* Yes, it is already garrison'd.
*Ham.* Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw:
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.
*Cap.* God be wi' you, sir. [*Exit.*
*Ros.* Will 't please you go, my lord?
*Ham.* I'll be with you straight. Go a little before. [*Exeunt all except Hamlet.*
How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward, I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do 't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:
Witness this army of such mass and charge
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure

22. *ranker*, higher.
39. *fust*, moulder.
50. *Makes mouths at*, mocks at.

To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

[*Exit.*

SCENE V. *Elsinore. A room in the castle.*

*Enter* QUEEN, HORATIO, *and a* Gentleman.

*Queen.* I will not speak with her.

*Gent.* She is importunate, indeed distract:
Her mood will needs be pitied.

*Queen.* What would she have?

*Gent.* She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;

58. *blood*, passion.
61. *trick*, whim.
9. *to collection*, to gather its purport.

Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.
*Hor.* 'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.
*Queen.* Let her come in. [*Exit Horatio.*
To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

*Re-enter* HORATIO, *with* OPHELIA.

*Oph.* Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?
*Queen.* How now, Ophelia!
*Oph.* [*Sings*] How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.
*Queen.* Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?
*Oph.* Say you? nay, pray you, mark.
[*Sings*] He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.
Oh! Oh!
*Queen.* Nay, but, Ophelia,—
*Oph.* Pray you, mark.
[*Sings*] White his shroud as the mountain snow,—

18. *amiss*, calamity.
25. *cockle hat;* a shell worn in the hat was a badge of the pilgrim.
33. *Oh! Oh!* Qq 'O oh!' Ff omit.

*Enter* KING.

*Queen.* Alas, look here, my lord.

*Oph.* [*Sings*] Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.

*King.* How do you, pretty lady?

*Oph.* Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

*King.* Conceit upon her father.

*Oph.* Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[*Sings*] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.
Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,
And dupp'd the chamber-door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.

*King.* Pretty Ophelia!

*Oph.* Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:

[*Sings*] By Gis and by Saint Charity,
Alack, and fie for shame!
Young men will do't, if they come to't;
By cock, they are to blame.
Quoth she, before you tumbled me,
You promised me to wed.

37. *Larded*, garnished.

41. *God 'ild you*, God reward you.

41. *the owl was a baker's daughter;* a reference to the legend of a baker's daughter who was turned into an owl for having refused bread to Christ.

48-55. This song is omitted in Ff.

53. *dupp'd*, opened.

59. *Gis*, Jesus.

[*He answers*] So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,
An thou hadst not come to my bed.

*King.* How long hath she been thus?

*Oph.* I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [*Exit.*

*King.* Follow her close; give her good watch,
I pray you. [*Exit Horatio.*

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions. First, her father slain:
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly,
In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places

84. *In hugger-mugger*, in unceremonious secrecy and haste.

95. *a murdering-piece*, a cannon charged with case-shot, and hence inflicting widespread death.

Gives me superfluous death. [*A noise within.*
*Queen.* Alack, what noise is this?
*King.* Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

*Enter another* Gentleman.

What is the matter?
*Gent.* Save yourself, my lord:
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry 'Choose we: Laertes shall be king:
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds:
'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!'
*Queen.* How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!
*King.* The doors are broke. [*Noise within.*

*Enter* LAERTES, *armed;* Danes *following.*

*Laer.* Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.
*Danes.* No, let 's come in.
*Laer.* I pray you, give me leave.
*Danes.* We will, we will.
[*They retire without the door.*
*Laer.* I thank you: keep the door. O thou vile king,
Give me my father!

97. *Switzers*, royal guards.
99. *list*, boundaries.
101. *head*, armed force.
110. *counter* (a term of the chase), following the trail in the wrong direction.

*Queen.* Calmly, good Laertes.
*Laer.* That drop of blood that 's calm proclaims me bastard,
Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow
Of my true mother.
*King.* What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:
There 's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.
Speak, man.
*Laer.* Where is my father?
*King.* Dead.
*Queen.* But not by him.
*King.* Let him demand his fill.
*Laer.* How came he dead? I 'll not be juggled with:
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I 'll be revenged
Most throughly for my father.
*King.* Who shall stay you?
*Laer.* My will, not all the world:
And for my means, I 'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.
*King.* Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is 't writ in your revenge,

122. *fear*, fear for.

That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

*Laer.* None but his enemies.

*King.* Will you know them then?

*Laer.* To his good friends thus wide I'll ope
my arms;
And like the kind life-rendering pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

*King.* Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgement pierce
As day does to your eye.

*Danes.* [*Within*] Let her come in.

*Laer.* How now! what noise is that?

*Re-enter* OPHELIA.

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is 't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

*Oph.* [*Sings*]

They bore him barefaced on the bier;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
And in his grave rain'd many a tear:—

Fare you well, my dove!

142. *swoopstake*, sweepstake; *i.e.* like a winner at cards, who draws in the combined stakes of both sides.

162. *instance*, evidence.

*Laer.* Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

*Oph.* [*Sings*] You must sing a-down a-down,
An you call him a-down-a.
O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

*Laer.* This nothing's more than matter.

*Oph.* There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

*Laer.* A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

*Oph.* There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died: they say he made a good end,—

[*Sings*] For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

*Laer.* Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

172. *how the wheel becomes it.* It is an old-time ballad, sung by the women as they spin.

172. *the false steward.* Nothing is known of this story.

178. *document*, instruction.

180. *fennel, . . . and columbines;* symbols, respectively, of flattery and ingratitude. They are given to the king.

181. *there's rue for you*, i.e. for the queen. Rue symbolised repentance, and was hence called 'herb of grace.'

182. *you must wear your rue with a difference.* A 'difference' was a heraldic bearing which served to discriminate the arms of distinct branches of the same family. The queen's 'repentance' has to be of another quality than Ophelia's.

184. *a daisy;* the symbol of dissembling.

184. *violets*, the symbol of faithfulness.

187. *bonny sweet Robin*, a line from the (lost) song 'Bonny Robin.'

*Oph.* [*Sings*] And will a' not come again? 190
And will a' not come again?
No, no, he is dead:
Go to thy death-bed:
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll:
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan:
God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' you. [*Exit.* 200

*Laer.* Do you see this, O God?

*King.* Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us, 210
And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

*Laer.* Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure funeral—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation—
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call 't in question.

*King.* So you shall;

190 f. From a contemporary song, 'The Milkmaid's Dumps.' It is burlesqued in *Eastward Ho* (1604, iii. 1.) by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, where Hamlet himself is also travestied.

214. *hatchment*, escutcheon.

And where the offence is let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE VI. *Another room in the castle.*

*Enter* HORATIO *and a* Servant.

*Hor.* What are they that would speak with me?
*Serv.* Sea-faring men, sir: they say they have letters for you.
*Hor.* Let them come in. [*Exit Servant.*
I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

*Enter* Sailors.

*First Sail.* God bless you, sir.
*Hor.* Let him bless thee too.
*First Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.
*Hor.* [*Reads*] 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death.

21. *thieves of mercy*, merciful thieves.

I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England: of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

'He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

Come, I will make you way for these your letters;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE VII. *Another room in the castle.*

*Enter* KING *and* LAERTES.

*King.* Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

*Laer.* It well appears: but tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

*King.* O, for two special reasons;
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unsinew'd
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself—
My virtue or my plague, be it either which—

26. *too light for the bore of the matter*, i.e. like small shot to a heavy gun.

9. *mainly were stirr'd up*, had the strongest motive to do.

She 's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

*Laer.* And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

*King.* Break not your sleeps for that: you must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:
I loved your father, and we love ourself;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

*Enter a* Messenger.

How now! what news?

*Mess.* Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:
This to your majesty; this to the queen.

*King.* From Hamlet! who brought them?

*Mess.* Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:
They were given me by Claudio; he received them
Of him that brought them.

17. *count*, account, trial.
18. *the general gender*, the masses.

*King.* Laertes, you shall hear them.
Leave us. [*Exit Messenger.*

[*Reads*] 'High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes: when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return.

'HAMLET.'

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?
*Laer.* Know you the hand?
*King.* 'Tis Hamlet's character. 'Naked!'
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'
Can you advise me?
*Laer.* I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
'Thus didest thou.'
*King.* If it be so, Laertes—
As how should it be so? how otherwise?—
Will you be ruled by me?
*Laer.* Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.
*King.* To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall:

59. *As how should it be so? how otherwise?* It is incomprehensible, and yet, on the evidence, beyond question.

63. *checking at*, starting away from (in falconry said of the hawk when she forsakes her proper game).

And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice
And call it accident.

*Laer.* My lord, I will be ruled;
The rather, if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.

*King.* It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one, and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.

*Laer.* What part is that, my lord?

*King.* A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,
Here was a gentleman of Normandy:—
I've seen myself, and served against, the French,
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant
Had witchcraft in 't; he grew unto his seat;
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
As had he been incorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

*Laer.* A Norman was 't?

*King.* A Norman.

68. *uncharge the practice*, acquit us of foul play.
77. *the unworthiest siege*, the lowest rank
82. *Importing health and graveness;* i.e. youth's careless livery imports health and the sables graveness.
88. *incorpsed*, incorporate.

*Laer.* Upon my life, Lamond.
*King.* The very same.
*Laer.* I know him well: he is the brooch indeed
And gem of all the nation.
*King.* He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you: the scrimers of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this,—
*Laer.* What out of this, my lord?
*King.* Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?
*Laer.* Why ask you this?
*King.* Not that I think you did not love your father;
But that I know love is begun by time;
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;

93. *Lamond;* the name possibly alludes to Pietro Monte, a famous cavalier and swordsman, who is mentioned by Castiglione as instructor to Louis VII.'s master of the horse.

94. *brooch*, an ornament worn in the hat.

97. *gave you such a masterly report*, i.e. reported him to be such a master.

101. *scrimers*, fencers, from Fr. 'escrimeurs.'

And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too much: that we would do,
We should do when we would; for this 'would' changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer:—
Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words?

*Laer.* To cut his throat i' the church.

*King.* No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together
And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

*Laer.* I will do't:
And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,

118. *plurisy*, excess, plethora.
123. *a spendthrift sigh*. Sighs were supposed to draw blood from the heart.
139. *unbated*, not blunted.
ib. *a pass of practice*, a treacherous thrust.

So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal: I 'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

*King.* Let 's further think of this;
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold,
If this should blast in proof. Soft! let me see:
We 'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings:
I ha 't:
When in your motion you are hot and dry—
As make your bouts more violent to that end—
And that he calls for drink, I 'll have prepared him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

*Enter* QUEEN.

How now, sweet queen!

*Queen.* One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow: your sister 's drown'd, Laertes.

*Laer.* Drown'd! O, where?

*Queen.* There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,

144. *cataplasm*, plaster.
155. *blast*, burst (a metaphor from fire-arms).
162. *stuck*, thrust.
170. *crow-flowers*, either buttercups or ragged robin.
170. *long purples*, a kind of orchid ('orchis mascula').

That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call
them:
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread
wide;
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

*Laer.* Alas, then, she is drown'd?

*Queen.* Drown'd, drown'd.

*Laer.* Too much of water hast thou, poor
Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears: but yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord:
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly douts it. [*Exit.*

*King.* Let 's follow, Gertrude:
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again;
Therefore let 's follow. [*Exeunt.*

171. *liberal*, licentious.
174. *sliver*, branch.
179. *incapable of*, without sense of.
180. *indued unto*, destined for.
188. *It is our trick*, it belongs to our character as men.
192. *douts*, Knight's emendation for Ff 'doubts.' Qq 'drowns.'

## ACT V.

### SCENE I. *A churchyard.*

*Enter two* Clowns, *with spades, etc.*

*First Clo.* Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

*Sec. Clo.* I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

*First Clo.* How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

*Sec. Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

*First Clo.* It must be 'se offendendo;' it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

*Sec. Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,—

*First Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

*Sec. Clo.* But is this law?

9. '*se offendendo*,' the clown's blunder for 'se defendendo.' He continues to treat 'justifiable suicide' as a variety of 'justifiable homicide.'

13. *argal*, a corruption of 'ergo.'

*First Clo.* Ay, marry, is 't; crowner's quest law.

*Sec. Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on 't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

*First Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

*Sec. Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

*First Clo.* A' was the first that ever bore arms.

*Sec. Clo.* Why, he had none.

*First Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged: could he dig without arms? I 'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

*Sec. Clo.* Go to.

*First Clo.* What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

*Sec. Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

*First Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.

*Sec. Clo.* 'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?'

32. *even Christian*, fellow-Christian.

*First Clo.* Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.
*Sec. Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.
*First Clo.* To 't.
*Sec. Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter* HAMLET *and* HORATIO, *afar off.*

*First Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker:' the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan: fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[*Exit Sec. Clown.*
[*He digs, and sings.*

In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,
O, methought, there was nothing meet.

*Ham.* Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

*Hor.* Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

*Ham.* 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

*First Clo.* [*Sings*]

But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,

68. *Yaughan.* Perhaps the name of an actual tavern-keeper in Shakespeare's London. Traces of a German 'Johan' in London have been discovered, and 'Yaughan' (rhyming with Vaughan, which then had two syllables and a guttural between) would be the natural English way of spelling it.

69 f. The three stanzas of the clown's song are a blundering version of 'The Aged Lover Renounceth Love'—a poem of fourteen stanzas—attributed to Lord Vaux and printed in *Tottel's Miscellany.* The first there runs:—

I lothe that I did loue,
In youth that I thought swete;
As time requires for my behoue
Methinkes they are not mete.

And hath shipped me intil the land,
As if I had never been such.

[*Throws up a skull.*

*Ham.* That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

*Hor.* It might, my lord.

*Ham.* Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?' This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade: here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on't.

*First Clo.* [*Sings*]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet:
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

[*Throws up another skull.*

*Ham.* There's another: why may not that

84. *jowls*, dashes.

85. *Cain's jaw-bone*; alluding to the ancient tradition that Cain slew Abel with the jaw-bone of an ass.

86. *politician*, plotter. The word in Shakespeare suggests Machiavelism.

97. *mazzard*, skull.

100. *loggats*, a game analogous both to quoits and bowls; log-shaped blocks of wood being thrown at a mark or 'jack.' The skull recalls the jack, and the bones the loggats.

be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

*Hor.* Not a jot more, my lord.

*Ham.* Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

*Hor.* Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

*Ham.* They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

*First Clo.* Mine, sir.

[*Sings*] O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

*Ham.* I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.

*First Clo.* You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

*Ham.* Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say

107. *quiddities . . . quillets*, subtleties, quibbles.

115. *the fine of his fines*, the end of his 'fines.'

119. *a pair of indentures*, agreements made in duplicate on the same sheet, which was then divided by an indented line.

121. *inheritor*, possessor.

it is thine: 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

*First Clo.* 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

*Ham.* What man dost thou dig it for?

*First Clo.* For no man, sir.

*Ham.* What woman, then?

*First Clo.* For none, neither.

*Ham.* Who is to be buried in 't?

*First Clo.* One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she 's dead.

*Ham.* How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

*First Clo.* Of all the days i' the year, I came to 't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

*Ham.* How long is that since?

*First Clo.* Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

*Ham.* Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

*First Clo.* Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, it 's no great matter there.

*Ham.* Why?

149. *by the card*, with precision. The image is probably nautical, from the sailor's chart. But the actor's copy of his part was also called a 'card'; so that 'to speak by the card' may originally have been a player's synonym for accurate speech.

151. *picked*, choice.

153. *kibe*, chilblain.

*First Clo.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

*Ham.* How came he mad?

*First Clo.* Very strangely, they say.

*Ham.* How strangely?

*First Clo.* Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

*Ham.* Upon what ground?

*First Clo.* Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

*Ham.* How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

*First Clo.* I' faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die—as we have many pocky corses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in—a' will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

*Ham.* Why he more than another?

*First Clo.* Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that a' will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

*Ham.* Whose was it?

*First Clo.* A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

*Ham.* Nay, I know not.

*First Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head

170. *there the men are as mad as he.* The 'madness' of Englishmen was a proverbial jest, like the gluttony of the Dutch and the family pride of the Welsh.

190. *three and twenty years.* $Q_1$ has 'this dozen years.' If the latter expression can be trusted, Shakespeare deliberately increased Hamlet's age from nineteen to thirty in the second version. But $Q_1$ may give merely a random figure.

once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

*Ham.* This?

*First Clo.* E'en that.

*Ham.* Let me see. [*Takes the skull.*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chop-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

*Hor.* What 's that, my lord?

*Ham.* Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

*Hor.* E'en so.

*Ham.* And smelt so? pah!

[*Puts down the skull.*

*Hor.* E'en so, my lord.

*Ham.* To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

*Hor.* 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

203. *Yorick.* It has been conjectured very plausibly that 'Hamlet's elegy on Yorick embodied a regretful remembrance of the great jester' Tarleton (d. 1588). L.

214. *favour*, aspect.

*Ham.* No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king,

*Enter* Priests, *etc. in procession; the Corpse of* Ophelia, Laertes *and* Mourners *following;* King, Queen, *their trains, etc.*

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo it own life: 'twas of some estate.
Couch we awhile, and mark.

[*Retiring with Horatio.*

*Laer.* What ceremony else?

*Ham.* That is Laertes,
A very noble youth: mark.

*Laer.* What ceremony else?

*First Priest.* Her obsequies have been as far enlarged
As we have warranty: her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,

236. *Imperious*, imperial. 239. *flaw*, blast.
244. *it;* so $Qq_{1-5}$, $Ff_{1,2}$.

Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her:
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

*Laer.* Must there no more be done?

*First Priest.* No more be done:
We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

*Laer.* Lay her i' the earth:
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

*Ham.* What, the fair Ophelia!

*Queen.* Sweets to the sweet: farewell!
[*Scattering flowers.*
I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.

*Laer.* O, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:
[*Leaps into the grave.*
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

*Ham.* [*Advancing*] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow

255. *crants*, garland, borne before the bier of an unmarried woman, and afterwards hung in the church.

Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them
stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane. [*Leaps into the grave.*
*Laer.* The devil take thy soul!
[*Grappling with him.*
*Ham.* Thou pray'st not well.
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I something in me dangerous,
Which let thy wiseness fear: hold off thy hand.
*King.* Pluck them asunder.
*Queen.* Hamlet, Hamlet!
*All.* Gentlemen,—
*Hor.* Good my lord, be quiet.
[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave.*
*Ham.* Why, I will fight with him upon this
theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.
*Queen.* O my son, what theme?
*Ham.* I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?
*King.* O, he is mad, Laertes.
*Queen.* For love of God, forbear him.
*Ham.* 'Swounds, show me what thou 'lt do:
Woo 't weep? woo 't fight? woo 't fast? woo 't
tear thyself?
Woo 't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?
I 'll do 't. Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

279. *wandering stars*, planets.
298. *Woo 't*, wilt thou.
299. *eisel*, vinegar; it was associated under this name with gall, as the bitter drink offered to Christ.

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou 'lt mouth,
I 'll rant as well as thou.
*Queen.* This is mere madness:
And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.
*Ham.* Hear you, sir;
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I loved you ever: but it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew and dog will have his day. [*Exit.*
*King.* I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.
[*Exit Horatio.*
[*To Laertes*] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
We 'll put the matter to the present push.
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.
This grave shall have a living monument:
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt.*

## Scene II. *A hall in the castle.*

*Enter* Hamlet *and* Horatio.

*Ham.* So much for this, sir: now shall you see the other;
You do remember all the circumstance?
*Hor.* Remember it, my lord!

310. *couplets.* The dove lays a pair of eggs at once. The chicks, when hatched, are covered with a golden down.
318. *present push,* immediate issue.

*Ham.* Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep: methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well
When our deep plots do pall; and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.
*Hor.* That is most certain.
*Ham.* Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,—
O royal knavery!—an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.
*Hor.* Is't possible?
*Ham.* Here's the commission: read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

6. *mutines*, mutineers.
ib. *bilboes*, stocks of iron used on board ship.
9. *pall*, fail.
13. *sea-gown*, a garment with high collar and short sleeves, reaching down to the knee, commonly worn by seamen.
21. *Importing*, concerning.
22. *With such bugs*, etc. 'With the suggestion of such terrors and perils if I am allowed to live.'
23. *no leisure bated*, without respite (abatement in time).

*Hor.* I beseech you.

*Ham.* Being thus be-netted round with villanies,—
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play,—I sat me down;
Devised a new commission; wrote it fair:
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote?

*Hor.* Ay, good my lord.

*Ham.* An earnest conjuration from the king,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such-like 'As'es of great charge,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

*Hor.* How was this seal'd?

*Ham.* Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in form of the other,
Subscribed it, gave 't the impression, placed it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

*Hor.* So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to 't.

*Ham.* Why, man, they did make love to this employment;

33. *statists*, statesmen. 42. *a comma*, a mark of connexion and continuity. 43. *charge*, weight.

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow:
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.
*Hor.* Why, what a king is this!
*Ham.* Does it not, thinks 't thee, stand me now upon—
He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother,
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage—is 't not perfect conscience,
To quit him with this arm? and is 't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?
*Hor.* It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.
*Ham.* It will be short: the interim is mine;
And a man's life 's no more than to say 'One.'
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For, by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his: I 'll court his favours:
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.
*Hor.* Peace! who comes here?

58. *defeat*, destruction.
59. 'Springs from their own meddling.'
63. *thinks 't thee*, seems it to thee.
63. 'Is it not incumbent upon me.'
66. *angle*, line.
79. *bravery*, bravado.

*Enter* OSRIC.

*Osr.* Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

*Ham.* I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

*Hor.* No, my good lord.

*Ham.* Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'tis a chough; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

*Osr.* Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

*Ham.* I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

*Osr.* I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

*Ham.* No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

*Osr.* It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

*Ham.* But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot, or my complexion—

*Osr.* Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,—as 'twere,—I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter,—

*Ham.* I beseech you, remember—

[*Hamlet moves him to put on his hat.*

*Osr.* Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in

89. *chough;* probably 'chuff,' a wealthy churl.

102. *or my complexion*—; some such words as 'deceives me' are understood. But Hamlet must be supposed to break off, as in his next speech, not to be *interrupted* by Osric.

108. *remember*, 'remember your courtesy,' *i.e.* be covered.

good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

*Ham.* Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

*Osr.* Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

*Ham.* The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

*Osr.* Sir?

*Hor.* Is 't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do 't, sir, really.

*Ham.* What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

*Osr.* Of Laertes?

*Hor.* His purse is empty already; all 's golden words are spent.

112. *differences*, distinctions.
113. *feelingly*, with nice perception.
120. *yaw*, stagger; his perfections would far outstrip the clumsy pace of their enumerator.
122. *a soul of great article*, one only to be described in an inventory of many items.
122. *infusion*, endowments.
123. *dearth*, value.
125. *trace*, follow.
128. *concernancy*, import.
131. *in another tongue.* Osric's own jargon is 'another tongue' to him when touched to new issues by Hamlet. Yet Hamlet is but mimicking him. Osric can understand if he tries: 'You will do't, sir, really.'

*Ham.* Of him, sir.

*Osr.* I know you are not ignorant—

*Ham.* I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

*Osr.* You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

*Ham.* I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

*Osr.* I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

*Ham.* What's his weapon?

*Osr.* Rapier and dagger.

*Ham.* That's two of his weapons: but, well.

*Osr.* The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

*Ham.* What call you the carriages?

*Hor.* I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

*Osr.* The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

*Ham.* The phrase would be more germane to the matter, if we could carry a cannon by our sides: I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it?

157. *assigns*, appendages.
160. *liberal conceit*, rich design.
162. *edified by the margent*, instructed by the marginal commentary (old texts being usually glossed in the margin).

*Osr.* The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

*Ham.* How if I answer 'no'?

*Osr.* I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

*Ham.* Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

*Osr.* Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

*Ham.* To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

*Osr.* I commend my duty to your lordship.

*Ham.* Yours, yours. [*Exit Osric.*] He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for 's turn.

*Hor.* This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

*Ham.* He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which

174. *twelve for nine.* Osric must be supposed to mean that Hamlet will make more than nine hits for twelve by Laertes, if the king is to win. This might involve twenty-one 'passes.'

181. *breathing time*, time for exercise.

195. *comply*, use ceremony.

198. *outward habit of encounter*, fashionable manners.

199. *a kind of yesty collection*, etc. The froth of empty phrases on which they float into the utterance of the most idle and fantastic opinions, and which immediately collapse at the touch of argument.

carries them through and through the most fanned and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

*Enter a* Lord.

*Lord.* My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

*Ham.* I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

*Lord.* The king and queen and all are coming down.

*Ham.* In happy time.

*Lord.* The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

*Ham.* She well instructs me. [*Exit Lord.*

*Hor.* You will lose this wager, my lord.

*Ham.* I do not think so: since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart: but it is no matter.

*Hor.* Nay, good my lord,—

*Ham.* It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman.

*Hor.* If your mind dislike any thing, obey it: I will forestal their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

*Ham.* Not a whit, we defy augury: there's a

206. *fanned and winnowed opinions;* so Hanmer for Ff 'fond and winnowed.' $Qq_2$, 3 'prophane and trennowed.'

226. *gain-giving* misgiving.

special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is 't to leave betimes? Let be.

*Enter* KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, *and* Lords, OSRIC, *and other* Attendants *with foils and gauntlets; a table and flagons of wine on it.*

*King.* Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The King puts Laertes' hand into Hamlet's.*

*Ham.* Give me your pardon, sir: I 've done you wrong;
But pardon 't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd
With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was 't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he 's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness: if 't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

*Laer.* I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour
I stand aloof; and will no reconcilement,

Till by some elder masters of known honour
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungored. But till that time
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.
*Ham.* I embrace it freely,
And will this brother's wager frankly play.
Give us the foils. Come on.
*Laer.* Come, one for me.
*Ham.* I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.
*Laer.* You mock me, sir.
*Ham.* No, by this hand.
*King.* Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?
*Ham.* Very well, my lord;
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side
*King.* I do not fear it; I have seen you both:
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.
*Laer.* This is too heavy, let me see another.
*Ham.* This likes me well. These foils have all a length? [*They prepare to play.*
*Osr.* Ay, my good lord.
*King.* Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,

268. *Stick . . . off*, stand in brilliant relief (Ger. 'abstechen'). Hamlet plays, of course, on the word 'foil.'

272. *laid the odds.* Since the odds have actually been laid on Laertes, this must mean either 'made a bet' (the king's wager being far heavier than his opponent's); or else that the points given to Hamlet are not equivalent to his actual inferiority. To which the king replies that the points given counterbalance Laertes' improvement in France.

Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,
'Now the king drinks to Hamlet.' Come, begin:
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

*Ham.* Come on, sir.

*Laer.* Come, my lord. [*They play.*

*Ham.* One.

*Laer.* No.

*Ham.* Judgement.

*Osr.* A hit, a very palpable hit.

*Laer.* Well; again.

*King.* Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;
Here's to thy health.
[*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*
Give him the cup.

*Ham.* I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile.
Come. [*They play.*] Another hit; what say you?

*Laer.* A touch, a touch, I do confess.

*King.* Our son shall win.

*Queen.* He's fat, and scant of breath.
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows:
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

*Ham.* Good madam!

*King.* Gertrude, do not drink.

*Queen.* I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

283. *union*, pearl.

298. *He's fat, and scant of breath;* a trait perhaps added with a view to the physique of Burbage, the first great actor of Hamlet.

*King.* [*Aside*] It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.

*Ham.* I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

*Queen.* Come, let me wipe thy face.

*Laer.* My lord, I'll hit him now.

*King.* I do not think 't.

*Laer.* [*Aside*] And yet it is almost against my conscience.

*Ham.* Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

*Laer.* Say you so? come on. [*They play.*

*Osr.* Nothing, neither way.

*Laer.* Have at you now!

[*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*

*King.* Part them; they are incensed.

*Ham.* Nay, come, again. [*The Queen falls.*

*Osr.* Look to the queen there, ho!

*Hor.* They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

*Osr.* How is 't, Laertes?

*Laer.* Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

*Ham.* How does the queen?

*King.* She swounds to see them bleed.

*Queen.* No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my dear Hamlet,—
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [*Dies.*

*Ham.* O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! Seek it out.

*Laer.* It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.
*Ham.* The point envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work. [*Stabs the King.*
*All.* Treason! treason!
*King.* O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.
*Ham.* Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?
Follow my mother. [*King dies.*
*Laer.* He is justly served;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me! [*Dies.*
*Ham.* Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.
*Hor.* Never believe it:
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:
Here's yet some liquor left.
*Ham.* As thou'rt a man,
Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.

[*March afar off, and shot within.*

What warlike noise is this?

*Osr.* Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

*Ham.* O, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:
I cannot live to hear the news from England;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited. The rest is silence. [*Dies.*

*Hor.* Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince;
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!
Why does the drum come hither?

[*March within.*

*Enter* FORTINBRAS, *the* English Ambassadors, *and others.*

*Fort.* Where is this sight?

*Hor.* What is it ye would see?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

*Fort.* This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,

368. *occurrents, more and less*, events, great and small.

369. *solicited*, prompted my action.

375. *quarry*, heap of dead.

375. *cries on havoc*, urges to ruthless slaughter. This is more in the character of Fortinbras than the possible alternative, 'cries out against the butchery.'

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?
*First Amb.* The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:
Where should we have our thanks?
*Hor.* Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you:
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about: so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I
Truly deliver.
*Fort.* Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune:
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.
*Hor.* Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance,
On plots and errors, happen.

386. *so jump upon*, so immediately following.

*Fort.* Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies: such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off.*

408. *put on*, put to the test.

409. *for his passage*, to solemnise his passing away.

# OTHELLO,

## THE MOOR OF VENICE

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUKE OF VENICE.
BRABANTIO, a senator.
Other Senators.
GRATIANO, brother to Brabantio.
LODOVICO, kinsman to Brabantio.
OTHELLO, a noble Moor in the service of the Venetian state.
CASSIO, his lieutenant.
IAGO, his ancient.
RODERIGO, a Venetian gentleman.
MONTANO, Othello's predecessor in the government of Cyprus.
Clown, servant to Othello.

DESDEMONA, daughter to Brabantio and wife to Othello.
EMILIA, wife to Iago.
BIANCA, mistress to Cassio.

Sailor, Messenger, Herald, Officers, Gentlemen, Musicians, and Attendants.

SCENE: *Venice; a Sea-port in Cyprus.*

# INTRODUCTION

Early Literary History

THE earliest edition of *Othello* was a Quarto, published in 1622, with the following title-page :—

THE | Tragœdy of Othello | The Moore of Venice. *As it hath beene diverse times acted at the* | Globe, and at the Black-Friers, by | *his Maiesties Seruants.* | *Written by* William Shakespeare. | LONDON, | Printed by N. O. for *Thomas Walkley*, and are to be sold at his | shop, at the Eagle and Child, in Brittans Bursse | 1622. |

To this the publisher prefixed a brief commendatory preface of some interest in the history of Shakespeare's fame :—

'THE STATIONER TO THE READER.

'*To set forth a booke without an Epistle, were like to the old English proverbe*, A blew coat without a badge, *and the Author being dead I thought good to take that piece of work upon mee: To commend it I will not, for that which is good I hope euery man will commend, without entreaty: and I am the bolder, because the Authors name is sufficient to vent his worke. Thus leauing euery one to the liberty of iudgement: I haue ventered to print this Play, and leaue it to the generall censure.*—*Yours*, THOMAS WALKLEY.'

This Quarto was apparently printed from an old

copy of the play, as curtailed and otherwise modified for performance. It omits about 150 lines, but retains many oaths and expletives, showing that it dates from the early years of the reign. The Folio text, printed in the following year, is more complete, and, save for the omission of the original expletives, more decisively Shakespearean in detail; it is substantially followed by modern editors. A Second Quarto, published by Walkley in 1630, reproduced the first with slight variations derived from an unknown MS. source closely related to the text of the Folio but not identical with it. Thus Othello's outburst, 'By heaven, he echoes me!' is given in this form in $Q_1$ (here clearly right); Ff have 'Alas, thou echos't me'; $Q_2$ 'Why dost thou ecchoe me?'

Date of Composition.

Direct evidence of the date of *Othello* is wholly wanting. A matter-of-fact criticism discovered an allusion to the armorial bearings of the new order of baronets, instituted in 1611, in the line—

> Our new heraldry is hands, not hearts;

and the line doubtless acquired a new zest for the audiences of that year. But the context is fully satisfied by a general meaning, and the date 1611 is altogether rebutted by the internal evidence of metre, style, and conception. These concur in assigning the play to a date between 1600 and 1605. The language is still the plastic speech of *Hamlet;* less variously inwrought indeed, for the most part, with intellect and imagery, but as exquisitely proportioned to its simpler needs, and becoming easily magnificent when occasion calls, as in Othello's wonderful 'farewell.' But the pregnant and difficult brevity of *Macbeth* is still remote. The year 1604 is generally accepted as a probable date. The first recorded

performance took place on November 1 of that year, before the court at Whitehall.[1] The second recorded performance occurred six years later, when Duke Frederick of Wurtemberg, according to his secretary's journal (April 30), witnessed 'l'histoire du More de Venise' at the Globe, 'lieu ordinaire où l'on joue les Comedies.' Three years later it was one of the six Shakespearean dramas chosen for the wedding festivities of the Princess Elizabeth. In later times *Othello* has had the chief share in bringing Shakespeare home to the artistic sense of the Latin peoples. The logical rigour with which a single situation is worked out step by step, appealed to the mind of France; and the performance of Alfred de Vigny's translation, notwithstanding the disaster provoked by the 'mouchoir' scenes, opened a new epoch in the history of the French stage. In Germany, on the other hand, its very severity and simplicity, its want of symbolic significance and obvious relation to 'ideas,'—of all, in fact, that made *Hamlet* a revelation to the Germanic world, told against *Othello*. The German interpretation of Shakespeare's mind has owed little, on the whole, to this most wonderful example of his concentrated, transparent, and harmonious art. The earlier German appreciation of *Othello* is of little moment, and it is not with Lessing nor with Schlegel, but with Coleridge, that the higher criticism of the play begins.

Source.

The plot of *Othello* was founded upon the twenty-seventh of the hundred novels in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (Decad. iii. Nov. 7), which tells how 'a Moorish captain weds a citizen of Venice.' The Moor, who is unnamed, has dazzled the republic by splendid services. *Disdemona*, allured among the rest, loves

[1] This performance is attested by Malone on the authority of documents then existent, which have since disappeared.

him 'for his prowess.' They are married, and live together in the utmost concord at Venice. At Disdemona's ardent entreaty she is allowed to accompany the expedition to Cyprus. Two of the Moor's officers, an ensign (*alfiero*) and a lieutenant (*capo di squadra*) are on terms of intimate friendship with him. The ensign makes love to Disdemona, and, failing to make her even comprehend his proposals, imagines that she is pre-engaged to the lieutenant. His 'love' changes to hate; he accuses her of adultery with the lieutenant. Accident plays into his hands. The lieutenant having been degraded for a casual breach of discipline, Disdemona appeals to the Moor to restore him, and the ensign drops the first poisonous insinuation into his ear. The stolen handkerchief completes his work; but he fails to win his wife's concurrence in the plot, and himself abstracts it from Disdemona's person while she is dandling his child. They arrange her death and the lieutenant's; the ensign's attempt to assassinate him fails, but he beats her to death in her husband's presence with a stocking of sand, and then together they draw down the ceiling and give out to the alarmed neighbours who rush in that she has been killed by a beam. Then the ensign accuses the Moor of her death, the Moor is tortured, banished, and finally killed by Disdemona's relations, while the ensign, escaping unscathed, continues his old practices, and is finally put to death by torture for another and wholly unconnected crime.

The novel, it will be seen, foreshadowed almost every incident in the play. But the tragic theme, of which Shakespeare made it so wonderfully expressive an instrument, is scarcely hinted. Its hero is the ensign, its subject his various machinations; Disdemona and the Moor have a secondary interest, as his victim and his dupe. The Moor's character is the least

Othello.

defined of all; but it was here that for Shakespeare the tragic problem lay; the situation of a simple, heroic nature, wrought by a worldly confidant to rupture his closest ties, had evident affinities with that of Brutus, and the resemblance grew under Shakespeare's hands. Like Brutus, Othello is too magnanimous, too self-confident, and too devoid of penetrating subtlety of brain, to grapple successfully with a difficult situation. Both are, by the confession of friend and foe, men of noble nature, who do their butchery like 'sacrificers' and not like butchers.[1] But Othello's nobleness is touched to immeasurably more tragic issues. Brutus' illusions are disastrous enough, but no horrible awakening follows his dream. He trusts Cassius when he ought to doubt him, and rejects his lead when he ought to follow it; but the result is for him only an heroic and honourable death entirely untouched by remorse. Othello's passionate, generous nature lavishes its confidences more ardently, and withdraws them more peremptorily, but a malignant fate lies in watch to bring his blunders home to him. He 'loves' Cassio, and never doubts honest Iago; his imagination is not alert to read either a 'soul of goodness in things evil,' or of evil in things seemingly good, but seizes ardently upon the outer semblance of the man and glorifies to a god or degrades to a demon, fortifying himself against every gleam of returning reason and insight by a fatuous energy of will. Hence even the trickery of Iago, gross and clumsy as it is, and poorly as it would figure in a drama of intrigue, completely succeeds. Othello's love, in its complexity, its intensity, and its blindness, has the very quality of tragic passion.

The love of Romeo and Juliet is not tragic; its intoxication ceases only with their breath, and it so

[1] *Julius Cæsar*, ii. 1. 166.

completely possesses and occupies their simple souls, that they present no point of vantage for disintegrating forces. But Othello's passion is an unstable compound of emotions that attach themselves to Desdemona's apparent attributes,—to the beauty his eyes rest on, and the purity he has no reason to doubt,—but have no access to her uncomprehended soul; and chaos descends upon him when Iago's horrible craft severs the Desdemona of his senses from the Desdemona of his dreams. Nowhere is the chaos more perplexed than in the moment when, on the verge of the last desperate act, he stands slowly getting down behind successive illusions to the burning core of the pang that is impelling his vengeful hand. Had it pleased heaven to try him with affliction, shames, poverty, captivity, he would have found patience; but to be a mark for scorn! And yet he could bear scorn too,—well, very well:—

> But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
> Where either I must live, or bear no life;
> The fountain from the which my current runs,
> Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!

Desdemona.

The character of Othello first became tragic in Shakespeare's hands. Cinthio's Disdemona is a commonplace heroine enough, but the portrait furnished Shakespeare with one significant hint. She is fascinated by the Moor's 'valour,'[1] she 'loves him for the dangers he had passed.' Her love, like his, is a love of the imagination, a perilous ecstasy of the idealising brain without secure root in the heart. It was needful for her tragic fate that her love should not be the engrossing and imperious passion of a Juliet; it had to leave her free for kindly interest in an unfortunate friend, and for innocent provoking coquetry on his behalf. She had to have enough of

[1] 'Tratta non da appetito donnesco, ma dalla virtù del Moro.'

the liveliness of Rosalind or Beatrice to run into danger, with enough of the innocence of Miranda to run into it unawares; something of Helena's audacity of enterprise, without her saving knowledge of men. 'An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest,' is Cassio's sensitive appreciation of these dangerous disparities in her demeanour. In her relations with Othello, so far as we see them, she has betrayed her venturous frankness rather than her inward modesty. She has taken her fortune by storm: the shy maiden who repelled the advances of the curled darlings of the nation, has leapt into the sooty bosom of the Moor; in the hour of union they are separated; and Othello's destiny is already in the implacable grip of Iago before he has had time to discover that a heart which moves with such light-hearted swiftness of impulse is one that can scarcely imagine or believe in sin. Cinthio's Moor had less excuse for his blindness; he had lived at Venice for an indefinite time with his wife in perfect concord before the summons to Cyprus came.

By consummate strokes such as these Shakespeare solved the problem of bringing the clumsy intrigue of his original into the sphere of psychological truth: Iago's plot is as ill calculated as the ensign's to wreck a normal marriage; but it is launched against a relationship so delicately poised that a touch suffices for its ruin.

Iago.

In Iago himself, on the contrary, Shakespeare deliberately set aside what was normal and plausible in his prototype. Cinthio's ensign is a stock personage of Italian romance,—a rejected lover who takes vengeance by slandering the lady to her husband. Iago, like all the tragic criminals of Shakespeare, has deeper springs of malignity than any personal offence can supply; 'offence' and 'vengeance' are only

the decent clothing of an indomitable impulse to contrive harm. He hotly denounces the appointment of Cassio; the motive is calculated to convince Roderigo of his sincerity; but when it has served his purpose we hear no more of it. The first soliloquy of the Second Act is a wonderful image of a mind shaping its course half blindly through seething fumes of hate, and darting now this way now that in the impatient effort to distinguish its course. Cassio loves Desdemona; Desdemona loves Cassio; nay, Iago loves her himself; and he suspects that Othello loves Emilia; therefore he will be even with him wife for wife; then he harks back to his first idea: Othello shall believe that Cassio loves her,—and Cassio the victim at once assumes the semblance of the criminal, for 'I fear Cassio with my night-cap too.' His plan is brewing, but inchoate; 'tis here,' as he says, 'but yet confused'; and when it grows clear, its execution owes more to happy chances skilfully seized than to any decisive intervention of will. Cinthio had given his ensign a touch of Iago's insidious reserve. 'I will not interfere between husband and wife, but keep your eyes open and you will see what I see,' is his first hint to the Moor; and 'for all the Moor's entreaties he would go no further.' But this trait, like so many others, remains isolated in Cinthio. Shakespeare gives it a far wider significance. Iago stands in the background and deals all the decisive strokes by the hands of others. The ensign has accomplices, Iago has tools. The ensign's wife refuses to be an accomplice in Disdemona's death, but is cognisant of the plot (p. 300), and aware of the use to be made of the handkerchief which, however, her husband steals. Iago secures the handkerchief by a less hazardous game, and besides enjoying the unconscious aid of Emilia has a second

innocent tool in the foolish young Roderigo. The ensign himself murders Disdemona and does his best to murder the lieutenant; Iago suggests and retires, while Othello and Roderigo execute his will. In spite of his open participation, the ensign succeeds (quite incredibly) in transferring the whole blame to the Moor, and escapes scot free; while Iago, with all his crafty dissimulation, falls a victim to his own cynical disbelief in honesty. Preoccupied with Desdemona's imaginary love-affairs, he overlooks Emilia's devotion to her new mistress, and the heroic daring which indignation will inspire in his despised and compliant wife. Thus Iago, the most clear-sighted person of the play, shares the tragic blindness which befalls his victims, and becomes in his degree a tragic figure too. But Shakespeare is not yet, as in *Macbeth*, deeply engaged with the psychology of crime; and he has long ceased to be allured by the mere terror and amazement of a criminal career, as in *Richard III.*

*Othello* occupies, with *Lear*, a transitional place between *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*, where crime is either absent altogether, or is merely a condition of the action, and *Macbeth*, where it is the very stuff of the tragic plot. Everywhere until we reach *Macbeth*, the focus of overpowering interest is not crime, but the ruinous perplexity engendered in a great and noble but ill-poised nature by agencies of which crime is only one, and not the most formidable. Not the king's crime but the paralysing fumes that rise from Denmark's unweeded garden beget the fatal perplexity of Hamlet. In *Othello* the unweeded garden has become fragrant and wholesome; but its diffused rankness and malignity are concentrated in the tongue of a single venomous serpent.

# OTHELLO,

## THE MOOR OF VENICE

### ACT I.

#### SCENE I. *Venice. A street.*

*Enter* RODERIGO *and* IAGO.

*Rod.* Tush! never tell me; I take it much unkindly
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.
*Iago.* 'Sblood, but you will not hear me:
If ever I did dream of such a matter
Abhor me.
*Rod.* Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.
*Iago.* Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Off-capp'd to him: and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance

13. *bombast circumstance*, bombastic circumlocution.

Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;
And, in conclusion,
Nonsuits my mediators: for, 'Certes,' says he,
'I have already chose my officer.'
And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;
That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric,
Wherein the toged consuls can propose
As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practice,
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election:
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus and on other grounds
Christian and heathen, must be be-lee'd and calm'd
By debitor and creditor: this counter-caster,
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
And I—God bless the mark!—his Moorship's ancient.

*Rod.* By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

*Iago.* Why, there's no remedy; 'tis the curse of service,
Preferment goes by letter and affection,
And not by old gradation, where each second
Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself,

21. *almost damn'd in a fair wife.* The most plausible interpretation is 'almost married' to Bianca; the epithet indicating either the disreputableness of this match or Iago's scorn for marriage in general.

24. *theoric*, theory.

25. *toged*, wearing the toga of civil (as distinct from military) authority.

25. *consuls*, councillors.

31. *counter-caster*, i.e. 'arithmetician'; he has been in the 'accounts branch'; a 'pen-and-ink soldier.' L.

32. *in good time*, 'forsooth'; here ironical, like 'à la bonne heure.'

Whether I in any just term am affined
To love the Moor.
*Rod.* I would not follow him then.
*Iago.* O, sir, content you;
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd:
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them, and when they have lined their coats
Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul;
And such a one do I profess myself. For, sir,
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:
In following him, I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end:
For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.
*Rod.* What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,
If he can carry 't thus!

39. *in any just term affined*, related to him in such a way as to be bound.
50. *visages*, outward semblances.
66. *owe*, own.

*Iago.* Call up her father,
Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,
Yet throw such changes of vexation on 't,
As it may lose some colour.
*Rod.* Here is her father's house; I 'll call aloud.
*Iago.* Do; with like timorous accent and dire yell
As when, by night and negligence, the fire
Is spied in populous cities.
*Rod.* What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!
*Iago.* Awake! what, ho, Brabantio! thieves! thieves! thieves!
Look to your house, your daughter and your bags!
Thieves! thieves!

BRABANTIO *appears above, at a window.*

*Bra.* What is the reason of this terrible summons?
What is the matter there?
*Rod.* Signior, is all your family within?
*Iago.* Are your doors lock'd?
*Bra.* Why, wherefore ask you this?
*Iago.* 'Zounds, sir, you 're robb'd; for shame, put on your gown;
Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise;
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you:
Arise, I say.
*Bra.* What, have you lost your wits?
*Rod.* Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?
*Bra.* Not I: what are you?

*Rod.* My name is Roderigo.

*Bra.* The worser welcome:
I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors:
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say
My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering draughts,
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come
To start my quiet.

*Rod.* Sir, sir, sir,—

*Bra.* But thou must needs be sure
My spirit and my place have in them power
To make this bitter to thee.

*Rod.* Patience, good sir.

*Bra.* What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;
My house is not a grange.

*Rod.* Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure soul I come to you.

*Iago.* 'Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you service and you think we are ruffians, you 'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse; you 'll have your nephews neigh to you; you 'll have coursers for cousins and gennets for germans.

*Bra.* What profane wretch art thou?

*Iago.* I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

*Bra.* Thou art a villain.

*Iago.* You are—a senator.

*Bra.* This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

100. *Upon*, out of.
106. *a grange*, an outlying granary.
107. *In simple and pure soul*, with absolutely honest intent.
112. *nephews*, grandsons.

*Rod.* Sir, I will answer any thing. But, I beseech you,
If't be your pleasure and most wise consent,
As partly I find it is, that your fair daughter,
At this odd-even and dull watch o' the night,
Transported, with no worse nor better guard
But with a knave of common hire, a góndolier,
To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor,—
If this be known to you and your allowance,
We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs;
But if you know not this, my manners tell me
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe
That, from the sense of all civility,
I thus would play and trifle with your reverence:
Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,
I say again, hath made a gross revolt;
Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortunes
In an extravagant and wheeling stranger
Of here and every where. Straight satisfy yourself:
If she be in her chamber or your house,
Let loose on me the justice of the state
For thus deluding you.

*Bra.* Strike on the tinder, ho!
Give me a taper! call up all my people!
This accident is not unlike my dream:
Belief of it oppresses me already.
Light, I say! light! [*Exit above.*

*Iago.* Farewell; for I must leave you:
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
To be produced—as, if I stay, I shall—
Against the Moor: for, I do know, the state,
However this may gall him with some check,
Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embark'd

124. *odd-even*, the undefined time after midnight which may be called either 'late' or 'early.'
124. *dull*, slumberous.
132. *from*, in violation of.
137. *extravagant*, wandering.

With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,
Which even now stand in act, that, for their souls,
Another of his fathom they have none,
To lead their business: in which regard,
Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains,
Yet for necessity of present life,
I must show out a flag and sign of love,
Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,
Lead to the Sagittary the raised search;
And there will I be with him. So, farewell.
[*Exit.*

*Enter, below,* BRABANTIO, *in his night-gown, and* Servants *with torches.*

*Bra.* It is too true an evil: gone she is;
And what 's to come of my despised time
Is nought but bitterness. Now, Roderigo,
Where didst thou see her? O unhappy girl!
With the Moor, say'st thou? Who would be a father!
How didst thou know 'twas she? O, she deceives me
Past thought! What said she to you? Get more tapers;
Raise all my kindred. Are they married, think you?
*Rod.* Truly, I think they are.
*Bra.* O heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood!
Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act. Is there not charms

159. *the Sagittary;* either the name of an inn (cf. 'the Centaur' in *Com. of Errors*) or the official residence of the military and naval commanders in the arsenal, where the statue of an archer is said still to exist. It is not known, however, to have been so called, and the allusions suggest that Shakespeare, in any case, thought of an inn.

By which the property of youth and maidhood
May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?
*Rod.* Yes, sir, I have indeed.
*Bra.* Call up my brother. O, would you had had her!
Some one way, some another. Do you know
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?
*Rod.* I think I can discover him, if you please
To get good guard and go along with me.
*Bra.* Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;
I may command at most. Get weapons, ho!
And raise some special officers of night.
On, good Roderigo: I'll deserve your pains.
[*Exeunt.*

## Scene II. *Another street.*

*Enter* Othello, Iago, *and* Attendants *with torches.*

*Iago.* Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience
To do no contrived murder: I lack iniquity
Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times
I had thought to have yerk'd him here under the ribs.
*Oth.* 'Tis better as it is.
*Iago.* Nay, but he prated,
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
Against your honour
That, with the little godliness I have,

173. *property*, (virtue) proper to. 5. *yerk'd*, thrust.

I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray you, sir,
Are you fast married? Be assured of this,
That the magnifico is much beloved,
And hath in his effect a voice potential
As double as the duke's: he will divorce you,
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance
The law, with all his might to enforce it on,
Will give him cable.

*Oth.* Let him do his spite:
My services which I have done the signiory
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,—
Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
I shall promulgate—I fetch my life and being
From men of royal siege, and my demerits
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune
As this that I have reach'd: for know, Iago,
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
I would not my unhoused free condition
Put into circumscription and confine
For the sea's worth. But, look! what lights come yond?

*Iago.* Those are the raised father and his friends:
You were best go in.

*Oth.* Not I; I must be found:
My parts, my title and my perfect soul
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

*Iago.* By Janus, I think no.

*Enter* CASSIO, *and certain* Officers *with torches.*

*Oth.* The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!

14. *As double*, as predominating over others.
22. *siege*, rank.
ib. *demerits*, merits.
23. *unbonneted*, without baring the head (cf. 'capping').
27. *circumscription*, limits.
31. *perfect soul*, flawless honour.

What is the news?

*Cas.* The duke does greet you, general,
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,
Even on the instant.

*Oth.* What is the matter, think you?

*Cas.* Something from Cyprus, as I may divine:
It is a business of some heat: the galleys
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
This very night at one another's heels,
And many of the consuls, raised and met,
Are at the duke's already: you have been hotly
call'd for;
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The senate hath sent about three several quests
To search you out.

*Oth.* 'Tis well I am found by you.
I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you. [*Exit.*

*Cas.* Ancient, what makes he here?

*Iago.* 'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack:
If it prove lawful prize, he 's made for ever.

*Cas.* I do not understand.

*Iago.* He 's married.

*Cas.* To who?

*Re-enter* OTHELLO.

*Iago.* Marry, to—Come, captain, will you go?

*Oth.* Have with you.

*Cas.* Here comes another troop to seek for you.

*Iago.* It is Brabantio. General, be advised;
He comes to bad intent.

*Enter* BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, *and* Officers *with torches and weapons.*

*Oth.* Holla! stand there!

46. *about*, round.
50. *carack*, large merchant-vessel.
55. *be advised*, take care.

*Rod.* Signior, it is the Moor.
*Bra.* Down with him, thief?
[*They draw on both sides.*
*Iago.* You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.
*Oth.* Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons.
*Bra.* O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?
Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her;
For I 'll refer me to all things of sense,
If she in chains of magic were not bound,
Whether a maid so tender, fair and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunn'd
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,
Would ever have, to incur a general mock,
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a thing as thou, to fear, not to delight.
Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense
That thou hast practised on her with foul charms,
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals
That weaken motion: I 'll have 't disputed on;
'Tis probable and palpable to thinking.
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee
For an abuser of the world, a practiser
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.
Lay hold upon him: if he do resist,
Subdue him at his peril.
*Oth.* Hold your hands,
Both you of my inclining, and the rest:
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it
Without a prompter. Where will you that I go

71. *to fear*, (fitted) to terrify.
72. *gross in sense*, unmistakably clear.
75. *motion*, natural impulse.
79. *inhibited*, prohibited.

To answer this your charge?
*Bra.* To prison, till fit time
Of law and course of direct session
Call thee to answer.
*Oth.* What if I do obey?
How may the duke be therewith satisfied,
Whose messengers are here about my side,
Upon some present business of the state
To bring me to him?
*First Off.* 'Tis true, most worthy signior;
The duke's in council, and your noble self,
I am sure, is sent for.
*Bra.* How! the duke in council!
In this time of the night! Bring him away:
Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself,
Or any of my brothers of the state,
Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own;
For if such actions may have passage free,
Bond-slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.
[*Exeunt.*

## Scene III. *A council-chamber.*

*The* Duke *and* Senators *sitting at a table;* Officers *attending.*

*Duke.* There is no composition in these news
That gives them credit.
*First Sen.* Indeed, they are disproportion'd;
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.
*Duke.* And mine, a hundred and forty.
*Sec. Sen.* And mine, two hundred:
But though they jump not on a just account,—
As in these cases, where the aim reports,

1. *composition*, coherence. 5. *jump*, agree.
6. *aim*, conjecture.

'Tis oft with difference—yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.
*Duke.* Nay, it is possible enough to judgement:
I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.
*Sailor.* [*Within*] What, ho! what, ho! what, ho!
*First Off.* A messenger from the galleys.

*Enter a* Sailor.

*Duke.* Now, what 's the business?
*Sail.* The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes;
So was I bid report here to the state
By Signior Angelo.
*Duke.* How say you by this change?
*First Sen.* This cannot be,
By no assay of reason: 'tis a pageant,
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider
The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,
And let ourselves again but understand,
That as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question bear it,
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,
But altogether lacks the abilities
That Rhodes is dress'd in: if we make thought of this,
We must not think the Turk is so unskilful
To leave that latest which concerns him first,
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain,
To wake and wage a danger profitless.

11. *the main article I do approve*, I admit the substantial truth of the report.

18. *assay*, test.

20. *The importancy*, etc. Cyprus belonged to Venice from 1489 till 1571, when it was taken by the Turks. The action of the play clearly falls in the interval.

24. *brace*, armour, hence state of defence.

26. *dress'd*, arrayed.

30. *wake and wage*, rouse and confront.

*Duke.* Nay, in all confidence, he 's not for Rhodes.
*First Off.* Here is more news.

*Enter a* Messenger.

*Mess.* The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course towards the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injointed them with an after fleet.
*First Sen.* Ay, so I thought. How many, as you guess?
*Mess.* Of thirty sail: and now they do re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.
*Duke.* 'Tis certain, then, for Cyprus.
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?
*First Sen.* He 's now in Florence.
*Duke.* Write from us to him; post-post-haste dispatch.
*First Sen.* Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

*Enter* Brabantio, Othello, Iago, Roderigo, *and* Officers.

*Duke.* Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.
[*To Brabantio*] I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;
We lack'd your counsel and your help to-night.
*Bra.* So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me;

35. *injointed them*, united their forces.

Neither my place nor aught I heard of business
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general
care
Take hold on me, for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
That it engluts and swallows other sorrows
And it is still itself.
*Duke.* Why, what's the matter?
*Bra.* My daughter! O, my daughter!
*Duke and Sen.* Dead?
*Bra.* Ay, to me;
She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.
*Duke.* Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself
And you of her, the bloody book of law
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
After your own sense, yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.
*Bra.* Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor, whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate for the state-affairs
Hath hither brought.
*Duke and Sen.* We are very sorry for't.
*Duke.* [*To Othello*] What, in your own part,
can you say to this?
*Bra.* Nothing, but this is so.
*Oth.* Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approved good masters,
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,

57. *engluts*, devours.
68. *read in the bitter letter*, i.e. have it carried out to the letter.
69. *proper*, own.
70. *Stood in your action*, were the object of your accusation,

It is most true; true, I have married her:
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace:
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
Their dearest action in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle,
And therefore little shall I grace my cause
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,
What conjuration and what mighty magic—
For such proceeding I am charged withal—
I won his daughter.

*Bra.* A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself; and she—in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, every thing—
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!
It is a judgement maim'd and most imperfect
That will confess perfection so could err
Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
To find out practices of cunning hell,
Why this should be. I therefore vouch again
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
Or with some dram conjured to this effect,
He wrought upon her.

*Duke.* To vouch this, is no proof,
Without more wider and more overt test

90. *round*, plain.

Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming do prefer against him.
*First Sen.* But, Othello, speak:
Did you by indirect and forced courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
Or came it by request and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth?
*Oth.* I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,
And let her speak of me before her father:
If you do find me foul in her report,
The trust, the office I do hold of you,
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.
*Duke.* Fetch Desdemona hither.
*Oth.* Ancient, conduct them: you best know the place. [*Exeunt Iago and Attendants.*
And, till she come, as truly as to heaven
I do confess the vices of my blood,
So justly to your grave ears I 'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.
*Duke.* Say it, Othello.
*Oth.* Her father loved me; oft invited me;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field,
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,
Of being taken by the insolent foe

108. *thin habits and poor likelihoods of modern seeming,* superficial semblances of general probability.

And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence
And portance in my travels' history:
Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven,
It was my hint to speak,—such was the process:
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house-affairs would draw her thence:
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She 'ld come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse: which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively: I did consent,
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:

139. *portance*, bearing.
ib. *travels'*; so Qq ('travells'); Ff 'travellers.'
140. *antres*, caverns.
142. *hint*, theme.
144. *Anthropophagi*, cannibals.

She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used:
Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

*Enter* DESDEMONA, IAGO, *and* Attendants.

*Duke.* I think this tale would win my daughter too.
Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best:
Men do their broken weapons rather use
Than their bare hands.
*Bra.* I pray you, hear her speak:
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man! Come hither, gentle mistress:
Do you perceive in all this noble company
Where most you owe obedience?
*Des.* My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I am bound for life and education;
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you; you are the lord of duty;
I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband,
And so much duty as my mother show'd
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor my lord.
*Bra.* God be wi' you! I have done.
Please it your grace, on to the state-affairs:
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.
Come hither, Moor:
I here do give thee that with all my heart
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart

182. *education*, up-bringing.

I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,
I am glad at soul I have no other child;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,
To hang clogs on them. I have done, my lord.
*Duke.* Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence,
Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers
Into your favour.
When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.
*Bra.* So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
He bears the sentence well that nothing bears
But the free comfort which from thence he hears,
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences, to sugar, or to gall,
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:
But words are words; I never yet did hear
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear.
I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.
*Duke.* The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus. Othello, the fortitude

199. *like yourself*, as it would become you to speak.
200. *grise*, stage, degree.
202 f. Rhymes were the common garb of moral 'sentences' in Elizabethan drama. Brabantio bitterly continues the play.
207. 'Patience laughs at the loss.'
216. *to sugar, or to gall;* (depending on 'are equivocal').

of the place is best known to you; and though we have there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

*Oth.* The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down: I do agnize
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardness, and do undertake
These present wars against the Ottomites.
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,
I crave fit disposition for my wife,
Due reference of place and exhibition,
With such accommodation and besort
As levels with her breeding.

*Duke.* If you please,
Be't at her father's.

*Bra.* I'll not have it so.

*Oth.* Nor I.

*Des.* Nor I; I would not there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear,
And let me find a charter in your voice,
To assist my simpleness.

*Duke.* What would you, Desdemona?

*Des.* That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
May trumpet to the world: my heart's subdued

227. *slubber*, sully.
232. *thrice-driven*, thrice winnowed, so as to contain only the lightest and softest down.
232. *agnize*, acknowledge.
238. 'Assignment of residence and maintenance.'
239. *accommodation and besort*, becoming accommodation.

Even to the very quality of my lord:
I saw Othello's visage in his mind,
And to his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
The rites for which I love him are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

*Oth.* Let her have your voices.
Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not,
To please the palate of my appetite,
Nor to comply with heat—the young affects
In me defunct—and proper satisfaction,
But to be free and bounteous to her mind:
And heaven defend your good souls, that you think
I will your serious and great business scant
For she is with me: no, when light-wing'd toys
Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dullness
My speculative and officed instruments,
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!

*Duke.* Be it as you shall privately determine,
Either for her stay or going: the affair cries haste,
And speed must answer it.

*First Sen.* You must away to-night.

*Oth.* With all my heart.

264. *affects*, passions.
265. *me.* Capell's reading for Qq. Ff 'my' has been generally adopted.
265. *proper*, personal.
267. *defend your good souls, that you think*, forbid, that you should think.
270. *seel*, blindfold (a term of falconry).
271. *My speculative and officed instruments*, my instruments of vision, charged with a special task. Ff 'instrument.'
273. *skillet*, kettle.

*Duke.* At nine i' the morning here we 'll meet again.
Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you;
With such things else of quality and respect
As doth import you.
*Oth.* So please your grace, my ancient;
A man he is of honesty and trust:
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good grace shall think
To be sent after me.
*Duke.* Let it be so.
Good night to every one. [*To Brab.*] And, noble signior,
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.
*First Sen.* Adieu, brave Moor; use Desdemona well.
*Bra.* Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
She has deceived her father, and may thee.
[*Exeunt Duke, Senators, Officers, etc.*
*Oth.* My life upon her faith! Honest Iago,
My Desdemona must I leave to thee:
I prithee, let thy wife attend on her;
And bring them after in the best advantage.
Come, Desdemona; I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee: we must obey the time.
[*Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.*
*Rod.* Iago,—
*Iago.* What say'st thou, noble heart?
*Rod.* What will I do, thinkest thou?
*Iago.* Why, go to bed, and sleep.
*Rod.* I will incontinently drown myself.

290. *delighted*, delightful.

*Iago.* If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why, thou silly gentleman!

*Rod.* It is silliness to live when to live is torment; and then have we a prescription to die when death is our physician.

*Iago.* O villanous! I have looked upon the world for four times seven years; and since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.

*Rod.* What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

*Iago.* Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this that you call love to be a sect or scion.

*Rod.* It cannot be.

*Iago.* It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man. Drown

323. *are gardens;* so Qq. Ff 'are our gardens.'
328. *manured,* tilled.

thyself! drown cats and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor—put money in thy purse—nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration;—put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills:—fill thy purse with money:—the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice: she must have change, she must: therefore put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst: if sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian be not too

343. *perdurable*, enduring.

346. *defeat thy favour*, disfigure thy face.

354. *luscious as locusts.* It is hard to decide between three ways of explaining the phrase: (1) locusts are said to be an actual delicacy in the East; (2) they may be called 'luscious' through association with 'wild honey' as the food of John the Baptist; (3) 'locusts' may mean the fruit of the carob-tree. [In the *Complete Christian Dictionary* of Wilson, Bagnell, and Simpson, seventh edition, 1661, 'locusts' (Matt. iii. 4) is explained: (1) all fruits and trees; (2) tops of herbs or plants; (3) a sort of herb so called growing in Palestine; (4) 'a certain vile creature so called. There were divers kinds of them, some hurtful and venomous, others commodious for meat [*i.e.* edible].' L.]

355. *coloquintida*, the fruit of the bitter-apple, colocynth.

362. *erring*, wandering (cf. 'extravagant and wheeling').

363. *barbarian*, with a play upon Barbary.

hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy than to be drowned and go without her.

*Rod.* Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

*Iago.* Thou art sure of me: go, make money: I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered. Traverse; go; provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

*Rod.* Where shall we meet i' the morning?

*Iago.* At my lodging.

*Rod.* I 'll be with thee betimes.

*Iago.* Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

*Rod.* What say you?

*Iago.* No more of drowning, do you hear?

*Rod.* I am changed: I 'll go sell all my land.

[*Exit.*

*Iago.* Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,
If I would time expend with such a snipe,
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if 't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;
The better shall my purpose work on him.

378. *Traverse*, march.

Cassio 's a proper man: let me see now:
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery—How, how?—Let 's see:—
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected, framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by the nose
As asses are.
I have 't. It is engender'd. Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. [*Exit.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I. *A Sea-port in Cyprus. An open place near the quay.*

*Enter* MONTANO *and two* Gentlemen.

*Mon.* What from the cape can you discern at sea?

*First Gent.* Nothing at all: it is a high-wrought flood;
I cannot, 'twixt the heaven and the main,
Descry a sail.

*Mon.* Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land;
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements:
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,

403. *dispose*, disposition.

Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

*Sec. Gent.* A segregation of the Turkish fleet:
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,
The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds;
The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous mane,
Seems to cast water on the burning bear,
And quench the guards of the ever-fix'd pole:
I never did like molestation view
On the enchafed flood.

*Mon.* If that the Turkish fleet
Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd;
It is impossible they bear it out.

*Enter a third* Gentleman.

*Third Gent.* News, lads! our wars are done.
The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,
That their designment halts: a noble ship of Venice
Hath seen a grievous wrack and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.

*Mon.* How! is this true?

*Third Gent.* The ship is here put in,
A Veronesa; Michael Cassio,
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,
Is come on shore: the Moor himself at sea,
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

*Mon.* I am glad on 't: 'tis a worthy governor.

*Third Gent.* But this same Cassio, though he speak of comfort
Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly,
And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted
With foul and violent tempest.

26. *Veronesa* (Qq 'Veronessa'; Ff 'Verennessa,' as an epithet of 'Michael Cassio'), probably a ship equipped by Verona, a Venetian dependency.

*Mon.* Pray heavens he be;
For I have served him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier. Let 's to the seaside, ho!
As well to see the vessel that 's come in
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,
Even till we make the main and the aerial blue
An indistinct regard.
*Third Gent.* Come, let 's do so;
For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

*Enter* CASSIO.

*Cas.* Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle,
That so approve the Moor! O, let the heavens
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.
*Mon.* Is he well shipp'd?
*Cas.* His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approved allowance;
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.
[*A cry within* 'A sail, a sail, a sail!'

*Enter a fourth* Gentleman.

*Cas.* What noise?
*Fourth Gent.* The town is empty; on the brow
o' the sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry 'A sail!'
*Cas.* My hopes do shape him for the governor.
[*Guns heard.*

39, 40. *we make . . . an indistinct regard;* till they melt together on the horizon's verge.
42. *arrivance,* company coming.
49. *approved allowance,* tried reputation.
50. *my hopes, not surfeited to death, stand in bold cure;* not having extravagantly indulged his hopes he has a good prospect of their fulfilment.

*Sec. Gent.* They do discharge their shot of courtesy:
Our friends at least.
*Cas.* I pray you, sir, go forth,
And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.
*Sec. Gent.* I shall. [*Exit.*
*Mon.* But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?
*Cas.* Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid
That paragons description and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in the essential vesture of creation
Does tire the ingener.

*Re-enter second* Gentleman.

How now! who has put in?
*Sec. Gent.* 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.
*Cas.* 'Has had most favourable and happy speed:
Tempests themselves, high seas and howling winds,
The gutter'd rocks and congregated sands,—
Traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel,—
As having sense of beauty, do omit
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.
*Mon.* What is she?
*Cas.* She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago,
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts
A se'nnight's speed. Great Jove, Othello guard,
And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,

63. *quirks*, flourishes.
63. *blazoning*, describing.
65. *ingener*, inventor, deviser. Her native quality outstrips the resources of art to describe it.
67. '*Has*, he has (Ff 'ha's').
69. *gutter'd*, indented. [Perhaps 'embedded in mud or ooze,' according to the Scotch and Irish sense of 'gutter.' L.]
70. *ensteep'd*, lying hidden in the water.

That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,
Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,
Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort!

*Enter* DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, *and* Attendants.

O, behold,
The riches of the ship is come on shore!
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
Enwheel thee round!

*Des.* I thank you, valiant Cassio.
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

*Cas.* He is not yet arrived: nor know I aught
But that he 's well and will be shortly here.

*Des.* O, but I fear—How lost you company?

*Cas.* The great contention of the sea and skies
Parted our fellowship—But, hark! a sail.

[*A cry within* 'A sail, a sail!' *Guns heard.*

*Sec. Gent.* They give their greeting to the citadel:
This likewise is a friend.

*Cas.* See for the news. [*Exit Gentleman.*
Good ancient, you are welcome. [*To Emilia*]
Welcome, mistress:
Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

[*Kissing her.*

*Iago.* Sir, would she give you so much of her lips
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,
You 'ld have enough.

*Des.* Alas, she has no speech.

*Iago.* In faith, too much;

I find it still, when I have list to sleep:
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,
And chides with thinking.

*Emil.* You have little cause to say so.

*Iago.* Come on, come on; you are pictures out of doors,

Bells in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds.

*Des.* O, fie upon thee, slanderer!

*Iago.* Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk:
You rise to play and go to bed to work.

*Emil.* You shall not write my praise.

*Iago.* No, let me not.

*Des.* What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise me?

*Iago.* O gentle lady, do not put me to 't;
For I am nothing if not critical.

*Des.* Come on, assay—There 's one gone to the harbour?

*Iago.* Ay, madam.

*Des.* I am not merry; but I do beguile
The thing I am by seeming otherwise.
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

*Iago.* I am about it; but indeed my invention
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frize;
It plucks out brains and all: but my Muse labours,
And thus she is deliver'd.
If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,
The one 's for use, the other useth it.

*Des.* Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

112. *in your injuries*, in giving offence.

127. *frize*, coarse woollen stuff.

*Iago.* If she be black, and thereto have a wit,
She 'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

*Des.* Worse and worse.

*Emil.* How if fair and foolish?

*Iago.* She never yet was foolish that was fair;
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

*Des.* These are old fond paradoxes to make fools laugh i' the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her that 's foul and foolish?

*Iago.* There 's none so foul and foolish thereunto,
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

*Des.* O heavy ignorance! thou praisest the worst best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving woman indeed, one that, in the authority of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?

*Iago.* She that was ever fair and never proud,
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,
Never lack'd gold and yet went never gay,
Fled from her wish and yet said 'Now I may,'
She that being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly,
She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail,
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,
See suitors following and not look behind,
She was a wight, if ever such wight were,—

*Des.* To do what?

*Iago.* To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

*Des.* O most lame and impotent conclusion! Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. How say you, Cassio? is he not a most profane and liberal counsellor?

147. *put on the vouch*, provoke the acknowledgment.
156. *change*, take in exchange
165. *liberal*, licentious.

(coarse for delicate fare).

*Cas.* He speaks home, madam: you may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar.

*Iago.* [*Aside*] He takes her by the palm: ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true; 'tis so, indeed: if such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in. Very good; well kissed! an excellent courtesy! 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? would they were clyster-pipes for your sake! [*Trumpet within.*] The Moor! I know his trumpet.

*Cas.* 'Tis truly so.

*Des.* Let 's meet him and receive him.

*Cas.* Lo, where he comes!

*Enter* OTHELLO *and* Attendants.

*Oth.* O my fair warrior!

*Des.* My dear Othello!

*Oth.* It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus-high and duck again as low
As hell 's from heaven! If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy; for I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

166. *you may relish him more*, etc. Iago's bluntness would be repugnant in a scholar, but is becoming in a soldier.

175. *play the sir*, play the seigneur, the fine gentleman.

*Des.* The heavens forbid
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow!
*Oth.* Amen to that, sweet powers!
I cannot speak enough of this content;
It stops me here; it is too much of joy:
And this, and this, the greatest discords be
[*Kissing her.*
That e'er our hearts shall make!
*Iago.* [*Aside*] O, you are well tuned now!
But I 'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.
*Oth.* Come, let us to the castle.
News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks are drown'd.
How does my old acquaintance of this isle?
Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus;
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
I prattle out of fashion, and I dote
In mine own comforts. I prithee, good Iago,
Go to the bay and disembark my coffers:
Bring thou the master to the citadel;
He is a good one, and his worthiness
Does challenge much respect. Come, Desdemona,
Once more, well met at Cyprus.
[*Exeunt Othello, Desdemona, and Attendants.*
*Iago.* Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. Come hither. If thou be'st valiant,—as, they say, base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them—list me. The lieutenant to-night watches on the court of guard. First, I must tell thee this: Desdemona is directly in love with him.
*Rod.* With him! why, 'tis not possible.
*Iago.* Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be

223. *thus*, i.e. to his lips.

instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies: and will she love him still for prating? let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be, again to inflame it and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners and beauties; all which the Moor is defective in: now, for want of these required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor; very nature will instruct her in it and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted,—as it is a most pregnant and unforced position—who stands so eminent in the degree of this fortune as Cassio does? a knave very voluble; no further conscionable than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing of his salt and most hidden loose affection? why, none; why, none: a slipper and subtle knave, a finder of occasions, that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself; a devilish knave. Besides, the knave is handsome, young, and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after: a pestilent complete knave; and the woman hath found him already.

*Rod.* I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blessed condition.

*Iago.* Blessed fig's-end! the wine she drinks is

232. *favour*, feature.

239. *pregnant*, evident.

244. *salt*, wanton.

255. *blessed condition*, holy disposition.

made of grapes: if she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

*Rod.* Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

*Iago.* Lechery, by this hand; an index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips that their breaths embraced together. Villanous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion. Pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay't upon you. Cassio knows you not. I'll not be far from you: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline; or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

*Rod.* Well.

*Iago.* Sir, he is rash and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you: provoke him, that he may; for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualification shall come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires by the means I shall then have to prefer them; and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

*Rod.* I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

*Iago.* I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at

263. *index*, preface. 275. *tainting*, discrediting.

the citadel: I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

*Rod.* Adieu. [*Exit.*

*Iago.* That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;
That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit:
The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,
And I dare think he 'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too;
Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure
I stand accountant for as great a sin,
But partly led to diet my revenge,
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leap'd into my seat; the thought whereof
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife,
Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor
At least into a jealousy so strong
That judgement cannot cure. Which thing to do,
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
I 'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb—
For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too—
Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me,
For making him egregiously an ass
And practising upon his peace and quiet

296. *apt*, likely.

312. *'trash' for his quick hunting*, restrain; a kennel term for the process of artificially weighting too eager or forward dogs. Trash is Steevens' emendation; Ff $Q_2$ have 'trace.'

313. *stand the putting on*, prove equal to the chase when cried on to the quarry. Iago hampers Roderigo's 'quick hunting' of Desdemona to start him on his own prey.

315. *Abuse him . . . in the rank garb*, slander him as a wanton; so Qq. Ff 'right garb.'

Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused: 320
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used. [*Exit.*

## Scene II. *A street.*

*Enter a* Herald *with a proclamation;* People *following.*

*Her.* It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him: for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open, and there is full liberty of feasting from this present 10
hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello! [*Exeunt.*

## Scene III. *A hall in the castle.*

*Enter* Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, *and* Attendants.

*Oth.* Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
Not to outsport discretion.
*Cas.* Iago hath direction what to do;

320. *here*, i.e. 'in my head.'

3. *mere*, complete.

9. *offices*, rooms in the castle where food and drink were stored and served.

But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye
Will I look to 't.

*Oth.* Iago is most honest.
Michael, good night: to-morrow with your earliest
Let me have speech with you. [*To Desdemona*]
Come, my dear love,
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;
That profit 's yet to come 'tween me and you.
Good night.

[*Exeunt Othello, Desdemona, and Attendants.*

*Enter* IAGO.

*Cas.* Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

*Iago.* Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o' the clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona; who let us not therefore blame: he hath not yet made wanton the night with her; and she is sport for Jove.

*Cas.* She 's a most exquisite lady.

*Iago.* And, I 'll warrant her, full of game.

*Cas.* Indeed, she 's a most fresh and delicate creature.

*Iago.* What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley of provocation.

*Cas.* An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest.

*Iago.* And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

*Cas.* She is indeed perfection.

*Iago.* Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine; and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

*Cas.* Not to-night, good Iago: I have very

14. *cast*, dismissed.

poor and unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

*Iago.* O, they are our friends; but one cup: I 'll drink for you.

*Cas.* I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too, and, behold, what innovation it makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

*Iago.* What, man! 'tis a night of revels: the gallants desire it.

*Cas.* Where are they?

*Iago.* Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

*Cas.* I 'll do 't; but it dislikes me. [*Exit.*

*Iago.* If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
He 'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool Roderigo,
Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,
To Desdemona hath to-night caroused
Potations pottle-deep; and he 's to watch:
Three lads of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits,
That hold their honours in a wary distance,
The very elements of this warlike isle,
Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,
Am I to put our Cassio in some action
That may offend the isle. But here they come:
If consequence do but approve my dream,
My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

41. *qualified,* diluted.

*Re-enter* CASSIO; *with him* MONTANO *and* Gentlemen; *Servants following with wine.*

*Cas.* 'Fore God, they have given me a rouse already.

*Mon.* Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

*Iago.* Some wine, ho!

[*Sings*] And let me the canakin clink, clink;
And let me the canakin clink:
A soldier's a man;
A life's but a span;
Why, then, let a soldier drink.
Some wine, boys!

*Cas.* 'Fore God, an excellent song.

*Iago.* I learned it in England, where, indeed, they are most potent in potting: your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander— Drink, ho!—are nothing to your English.

*Cas.* Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

*Iago.* Why, he drinks you with facility your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be filled.

*Cas.* To the health of our general!

*Mon.* I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.

*Iago.* O sweet England!
King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he call'd the tailor lown.

92. *King Stephen*, etc. From the old ballad of 'Take thy old cloak about thee.' It is printed in Percy's *Reliques*. Shakespeare quotes it again in *The Tempest*, iv. 1. 221.

He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree:
'Tis pride that pulls the country down;
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.
Some wine, ho!

*Cas.* Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

*Iago.* Will you hear 't again?

*Cas.* No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. Well, God 's above all; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

*Iago.* It 's true, good lieutenant.

*Cas.* For mine own part—no offence to the general, nor any man of quality—I hope to be saved.

*Iago.* And so do I too, lieutenant.

*Cas.* Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let 's have no more of this; let 's to our affairs. God forgive us our sins! Gentlemen, let 's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk: this is my ancient; this is my right hand, and this is my left: I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

*All.* Excellent well.

*Cas.* Why, very well then; you must not think then that I am drunk. [*Exit.*

*Mon.* To the platform, masters; come, let 's set the watch.

*Iago.* You see this fellow that is gone before;
He is a soldier fit to stand by Cæsar
And give direction: and do but see his vice;
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as the other: 'tis pity of him.
I fear the trust Othello puts him in,

On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will shake this island.
*Mon.* But is he often thus?
*Iago.* 'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep:
He'll watch the horologe a double set,
If drink rock not his cradle.
*Mon.* It were well
The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps he sees it not, or his good nature
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils: is not this true?

*Enter* RODERIGO.

*Iago.* [*Aside to him*] How now, Roderigo!
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go.
[*Exit Roderigo.*
*Mon.* And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor
Should hazard such a place as his own second
With one of an ingraft infirmity:
It were an honest action to say
So to the Moor.
*Iago.* Not I, for this fair island:
I do love Cassio well; and would do much
To cure him of this evil—But, hark! what noise?
[*Cry within:* 'Help! help!'

*Re-enter* CASSIO, *driving in* RODERIGO.

*Cas.* You rogue! you rascal!
*Mon.* What 's the matter, lieutenant?
*Cas.* A knave teach me my duty!
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.
*Rod.* Beat me!

135. *set*, series of twelve hours. He will watch a whole day and night.
145. *ingraft*, ingrafted, ineradicable.
152. *twiggen*; so Ff. Qq 'wicker,' with the same sense.

*Cas.* Dost thou prate, rogue?

[*Striking Roderigo.*

*Mon.* Nay, good lieutenant; I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

*Cas.* Let me go, sir, or I 'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

*Mon.* Come, come, you 're drunk.

*Cas.* Drunk! [*They fight.*

*Iago.* [*Aside to Roderigo*] Away, I say; go out, and cry a mutiny. [*Exit Roderigo.*

Nay, good lieutenant!—God's will, gentlemen;—
Help, ho!—Lieutenant,—sir,—Montano,—sir;—
Help, masters!—Here 's a goodly watch indeed! 160

[*A bell rings.*

Who 's that which rings the bell?—Diablo, ho!
The town will rise: God's will, lieutenant, hold!
You will be shamed for ever.

*Re-enter* OTHELLO *and* Attendants.

*Oth.* What is the matter here?

*Mon.* 'Zounds, I bleed still; I am hurt to the death. [*Faints.*

*Oth.* Hold, for your lives!

*Iago.* Hold, ho! Lieutenant,—sir,—Montano, —gentlemen,—
Have you forgot all sense of place and duty?
Hold! the general speaks to you; hold, hold, for shame!

*Oth.* Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?
Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that 170
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage

170. *turn'd Turks;* a bitter play upon the proverbial phrase, which meant to 'make a complete change for the worse.'

Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.
Silence that dreadful bell: it frights the isle
From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?
Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,
Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.
*Iago.* I do not know: friends all but now, even now,
In quarter, and in terms like bride and groom
Devesting them for bed; and then, but now,
As if some planet had unwitted men,
Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,
In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
Any beginning to this peevish odds;
And would in action glorious I had lost
Those legs that brought me to a part of it!
*Oth.* How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?
*Cas.* I pray you, pardon me; I cannot speak.
*Oth.* Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;
The gravity and stillness of your youth
The world hath noted, and your name is great
In mouths of wisest censure: what 's the matter,
That you unlace your reputation thus
And spend your rich opinion for the name
Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.
*Mon.* Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger:
Your officer, Iago, can inform you—
While I spare speech, which something now offends me—
Of all that I do know: nor know I aught
By me that 's said or done amiss this night;
Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,

176. *From her propriety*, out of herself.
180. *In quarter, and in terms*, on terms of peace and intimacy.
185. *peevish*, foolish.
190. *civil*, law-abiding.
195. *opinion*, estimation, repute.

And to defend ourselves it be a sin
When violence assails us.
*Oth.* Now, by heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
And passion, having my best judgement collied,
Assays to lead the way: if I once stir,
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
How this foul rout began, who set it on;
And he that is approved in this offence,
Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,
Shall lose me. What! in a town of war,
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestic quarrel,
In night, and on the court and guard of safety!
'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?
*Mon.* If partially affined, or leagued in office,
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.
*Iago.* Touch me not so near:
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, general.
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow crying out for help;
And Cassio following him with determined sword,
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause:
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Lest by his clamour—as it so fell out—
The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose; and I return'd the rather

206. *collied*, obscured.
215. *manage*, carry on.
218. *affined*, related (to any culprit).
232. *in fright*, into a panic.

For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
And Cassio high in oath; which till to-night
I ne'er might say before. When I came back—
For this was brief—I found them close together,
At blow and thrust; even as again they were
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter cannot I report:
But men are men; the best sometimes forget:
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,
As men in rage strike those that wish them best,
Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received
From him that fled some strange indignity,
Which patience could not pass.
*Oth.* I know, Iago,
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine.

*Re-enter* DESDEMONA, *attended.*

Look, if my gentle love be not raised up!
I 'll make thee an example.
*Des.* What 's the matter?
*Oth.* All 's well now, sweeting; come away to bed.
Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon:
[*To Montano, who is led off.*
Lead him off.
Iago, look with care about the town,
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.
Come, Desdemona: 'tis the soldiers' life
To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.
[*Exeunt all but Iago and Cassio.*
*Iago.* What, are you hurt, lieutenant?
*Cas.* Ay, past all surgery.
*Iago.* Marry, heaven forbid!
*Cas.* Reputation, reputation, reputation! O,

I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

*Iago.* As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition: oft got without merit, and lost without deserving: you have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again: you are but now cast in his mood, a punishment more in policy than in malice; even so as one would beat his offenceless dog to affright an imperious lion: sue to him again, and he's yours.

*Cas.* I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot? and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow? O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!

*Iago.* What was he that you followed with your sword? What had he done to you?

*Cas.* I know not.

*Iago.* Is't possible?

*Cas.* I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

*Iago.* Why, but you are now well enough: how came you thus recovered?

*Cas.* It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath: one unperfectness

shows me another, to make me frankly despise myself.

*Iago.* Come, you are too severe a moraler: as the time, the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

*Cas.* I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange! Every inordinate cup is unblessed and the ingredient is a devil.

*Iago.* Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used: exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

*Cas.* I have well approved it, sir. I drunk!

*Iago.* You or any man living may be drunk at some time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general: I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces: confess yourself freely to her; importune her help to put you in your place again: she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested: this broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

*Cas.* You advise me well.

317. *approved*, found by experience.
330. *lay*, wager.

*Iago.* I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

*Cas.* I think it freely; and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me: I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here.

*Iago.* You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

*Cas.* Good night, honest Iago. [*Exit.*

*Iago.* And what 's he then that says I play the villain?
When this advice is free I give and honest,
Probal to thinking, and indeed the course
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
The inclining Desdemona to subdue
In any honest suit: she 's framed as fruitful
As the free elements. And then for her
To win the Moor, were 't to renounce his baptism,
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,
His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. How am I then a villain
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now: for whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I 'll pour this pestilence into his ear,
That she repeals him for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.

344. *Probal*, probable. 347. *fruitful*, bountiful.

So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

*Re-enter* RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo!

*Rod.* I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgelled; and I think the issue will be, I shall have so much experience for my pains, and so, with no money at all and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

*Iago.* How poor are they that have not patience!
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?
Thou know'st we work by wit, and not by witchcraft;
And wit depends on dilatory time.
Does 't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,
And thou by that small hurt hast cashier'd Cassio:
Though other things grow fair against the sun,
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe:
Content thyself awhile. By the mass, 'tis morning;
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.
Retire thee; go where thou art billeted:
Away, I say; thou shalt know more hereafter:
Nay, get thee gone. [*Exit Roderigo.*] Two things are to be done:
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress;
I 'll set her on;
Myself the while to draw the Moor apart,
And bring him jump when he may Cassio find
Soliciting his wife: ay, that 's the way:
Dull not device by coldness and delay. [*Exit.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I. *Before the castle.*

*Enter* CASSIO *and some* Musicians.

*Cas.* Masters, play here; I will content your pains;
Something that's brief; and bid 'Good morrow, general.' [*Music.*

*Enter* Clown.

*Clo.* Why, masters, have your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' the nose thus?

*First Mus.* How, sir, how!

*Clo.* Are these, I pray you, wind-instruments?

*First Mus.* Ay, marry, are they, sir.

*Clo.* O, thereby hangs a tail.

*First Mus.* Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

*Clo.* Marry, sir, by many a wind-instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you: and the general so likes your music, that he desires you, for love's sake, to make no more noise with it.

*First Mus.* Well, sir, we will not.

*Clo.* If you have any music that may not be heard, to't again: but, as they say, to hear music the general does not greatly care.

*First Mus.* We have none such, sir.

*Clo.* Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away: go; vanish into air; away! [*Exeunt Musicians.*

4 f. 'Speaking in the nose' was a symptom of a disease reputed particularly rife at Naples.

*Cas.* Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

*Clo.* No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

*Cas.* Prithee, keep up thy quillets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: wilt thou do this?

*Clo.* She is stirring, sir: if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her.

*Cas.* Do, good my friend. [*Exit Clown.*

*Enter* IAGO.

In happy time, Iago.

*Iago.* You have not been a-bed, then?

*Cas.* Why, no; the day had broke
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,
To send in to your wife: my suit to her
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona
Procure me some access.

*Iago.* I'll send her to you presently;
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor
Out of the way, that your converse and business
May be more free.

*Cas.* I humbly thank you for't. [*Exit Iago.*]
I never knew
A Florentine more kind and honest.

*Enter* EMILIA.

*Emil.* Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry
For your displeasure; but all will sure be well.
The general and his wife are talking of it;
And she speaks for you stoutly: the Moor replies,
That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus,

25. *quillets*, quibbles. 32. *In happy time*, 'well-met.'

And great affinity and that in wholesome wisdom
He might not but refuse you; but he protests he loves you,
And needs no other suitor but his likings
To take the safest occasion by the front
To bring you in again.
*Cas.* Yet, I beseech you,
If you think fit, or that it may be done,
Give me advantage of some brief discourse
With Desdemona alone.
*Emil.* Pray you, come in:
I will bestow you where you shall have time
To speak your bosom freely.
*Cas.* I am much bound to you. [*Exeunt.*

## Scene II. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* Othello, Iago, *and* Gentlemen.

*Oth.* These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;
And by him do my duties to the senate:
That done, I will be walking on the works;
Repair there to me.
*Iago.* Well, my good lord, I 'll do 't.
*Oth.* This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see 't?
*Gent.* We 'll wait upon your lordship.
[*Exeunt.*

## Scene III. *The garden of the castle.*

*Enter* Desdemona, Cassio, *and* Emilia.

*Des.* Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do

55. *advantage*, opportunity.

All my abilities in thy behalf.
*Emil.* Good madam, do: I warrant it grieves my husband,
As if the case were his.
*Des.* O, that 's an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio,
But I will have my lord and you again
As friendly as you were.
*Cas.* Bounteous madam,
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,
He 's never any thing but your true servant.
*Des.* I know 't; I thank you. You do love my lord:
You have known him long; and be you well assured
He shall in strangeness stand no further off
Than in a politic distance.
*Cas.* Ay, but, lady,
That policy may either last so long,
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That, I being absent and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.
*Des.* Do not doubt that; before Emilia here
I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship, I 'll perform it
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;
I 'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience;
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
I 'll intermingle every thing he does
With Cassio's suit: therefore be merry, Cassio;
For thy solicitor shall rather die
Than give thy cause away.

*Enter* OTHELLO *and* IAGO, *at a distance.*

*Emil.* Madam, here comes my lord.

23. *watch him tame*, keep him awake till he is tame (as was done with hawks).

*Cas.* Madam, I 'll take my leave.
*Des.* Nay, stay, and hear me speak.
*Cas.* Madam, not now : I am very ill at ease,
Unfit for mine own purposes.
*Des.* Well, do your discretion. [*Exit Cassio.*
*Iago.* Ha ! I like not that.
*Oth.* What dost thou say ?
*Iago.* Nothing, my lord : or if—I know not what.
*Oth.* Was not that Cassio parted from my wife ?
*Iago.* Cassio, my lord ! No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.
*Oth.* I do believe 'twas he.
*Des.* How now, my lord !
I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.
*Oth.* Who is 't you mean ?
*Des.* Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take ;
For if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,
I have no judgement in an honest face :
I prithee, call him back.
*Oth.* Went he hence now ?
*Des.* Ay, sooth ; so humbled
That he hath left part of his grief with me,
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.
*Oth.* Not now, sweet Desdemona ; some other time.
*Des.* But shall 't be shortly ?
*Oth.* The sooner, sweet, for you.
*Des.* Shall 't be to-night at supper ?

*Oth.* No, not to-night.
*Des.* To-morrow dinner, then?
*Oth.* I shall not dine at home;
I meet the captains at the citadel.
*Des.* Why then to-morrow night; or Tuesday morn;
On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn:
I prithee, name the time; but let it not
Exceed three days: in faith, he's penitent;
And yet his trespass, in our common reason—
Save that, they say, the wars must make examples
Out of their best—is not almost a fault
To incur a private check. When shall he come?
Tell me, Othello: I wonder in my soul,
What you would ask me, that I should deny,
Or stand so mammering on. What! Michael Cassio,
That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time,
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,
Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do
To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much,—
*Oth.* Prithee, no more: let him come when he will:
I will deny thee nothing.
*Des.* Why, this is not a boon;
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit
To your own person: nay, when I have a suit
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight,
And fearful to be granted.
*Oth.* I will deny thee nothing:
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,
To leave me but a little to myself.

70. *mammering*, hesitating. 82. *poise*, moment.

*Des.* Shall I deny you? no: farewell, my lord.
*Oth.* Farewell, my Desdemona: I 'll come to thee straight.
*Des.* Emilia, come. Be as your fancies teach you;
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.
[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*
*Oth.* Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,
But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.
*Iago.* My noble lord,—
*Oth.* What dost thou say, Iago?
*Iago.* Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,
Know of your love?
*Oth.* He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?
*Iago.* But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.
*Oth.* Why of thy thought, Iago?
*Iago.* I did not think he had been acquainted with her.
*Oth.* O, yes; and went between us very oft.
*Iago.* Indeed!
*Oth.* Indeed! ay, indeed: discern'st thou aught in that?
Is he not honest?
*Iago.* Honest, my lord!
*Oth.* Honest! ay, honest.
*Iago.* My lord, for aught I know.
*Oth.* What dost thou think?
*Iago.* Think, my lord!
*Oth.* Think, my lord!
By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought

Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something:
I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that,
When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like?
And when I told thee he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst 'Indeed!'
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: if thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.
*Iago.* My lord, you know I love you.
*Oth.* I think thou dost;
And, for I know thou 'rt full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things in a false disloyal knave
Are tricks of custom, but in a man that 's just
They are close delations, working from the heart
That passion cannot rule.
*Iago.* For Michael Cassio,
I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.
*Oth.* I think so too.
*Iago.* Men should be what they seem;
Or those that be not, would they might seem none!
*Oth.* Certain, men should be what they seem.
*Iago.* Why then I think Cassio 's an honest man.
*Oth.* Nay, yet there 's more in this:
I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

123. *close delations*, secret accusations, breaking forth from a heart not swayed by passion.

131. *as to thy thinkings*, as unreservedly as to thy thoughts.

*Iago.* Good my lord, pardon me:
Though I am bound to every act of duty,
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.
Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and
false;
As where's that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure,
But some uncleanly apprehensions
Keep leets and law-days and in session sit
With meditations lawful?
*Oth.* Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,
If thou but think'st him wrong'd and makest his ear
A stranger to thy thoughts.
*Iago.* I do beseech you—
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not—that your wisdom yet,
From one that so imperfectly conceits,
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.
*Oth.* What dost thou mean?
*Iago.* Good name in man and woman, dear my
lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something,
nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thou-
sands;

140. *Keep leets and law-days* (lit. the days on which the manorial courts were held), hold periodical sway within us.

156. *the immediate jewel of their souls*, their most intimate possession after life itself.

But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

*Oth.* By heaven, I 'll know thy thoughts.

*Iago.* You cannot, if my heart were in your hand ;
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

*Oth.* Ha !

*Iago.* O, beware, my lord, of jealousy ;
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on : that cuckold lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger ;
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves !

*Oth.* O misery !

*Iago.* Poor and content is rich, and rich enough,
But riches fineless is as poor as winter
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy !

*Oth.* Why, why is this ?
Think'st thou I 'ld make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions ? No ; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved : exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well ;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous :

166. *mock*, i.e. makes its sport with its prey (like a cat), torturing him with 'damned minutes' of doubt, instead of making him 'certain of his fate' at once. Hanmer read 'make.'

168. *his wronger*, i.e. the wife.

173. *fineless*, endless.

180. *once to be resolved*, to obtain definite and final assurance, one way or the other.

182. *exsufflicate*, bubble-like, empty, unsubstantial.

Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;
I 'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And on the proof, there is no more but this,
Away at once with love or jealousy!
*Iago.* I am glad of it; for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;
Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure:
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty, be abused; look to 't:
I know our country disposition well;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is not to leave 't undone, but keep 't unknown.
*Oth.* Dost thou say so?
*Iago.* She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
She loved them most.
*Oth.* And so she did.
*Iago.* Why, go to, then;
She that so young could give out such a seeming,
To seel her father's eyes up close as oak—
He thought 'twas witchcraft;—but I am much to blame—
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon
For too much loving you.
*Oth.* I am bound to thee for ever.
*Iago.* I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.
*Oth.* Not a jot, not a jot.

200. *self-bounty*, inherent kindness.

*Iago.* I' faith, I fear it has.
I hope you will consider what is spoke
Comes from my love. But I do see you 're moved:
I am to pray you not to strain my speech
To grosser issues nor to larger reach
Than to suspicion.
*Oth.* I will not.
*Iago.* Should you do so, my lord,
My speech should fall into such vile success
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio 's my worthy friend—
My lord, I see you 're moved.
*Oth.* No, not much moved:
I do not think but Desdemona 's honest.
*Iago.* Long live she so! and long live you to think so!
*Oth.* And yet, how nature erring from itself,—
*Iago.* Ay, there 's the point: as—to be bold with you—
Not to affect many proposed matches
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
Whereto we see in all things nature tends—
Foh! one may smell in such a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.
But pardon me; I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her; though I may fear
Her will, recoiling to her better judgement,
May fall to match you with her country forms
And happily repent.
*Oth.* Farewell, farewell:
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;
Set on thy wife to observe: leave me, Iago.
*Iago.* [*Going*] My lord, I take my leave.

222. *success*, result.
234. *in position*, by way of positive assertion.
236. *recoiling to*, slipping from the control of.
238. *happily*, haply.

*Oth.* Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.
*Iago.* [*Returning*] My lord, I would I might entreat your honour
To scan this thing no further; leave it to time:
Though it be fit that Cassio have his place,
For, sure, he fills it up with great ability,
Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,
You shall by that perceive him and his means:
Note, if your lady strain his entertainment
With any strong or vehement importunity;
Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,
Let me be thought too busy in my fears—
As worthy cause I have to fear I am—
And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.
*Oth.* Fear not my government.
*Iago.* I once more take my leave. [*Exit.*
*Oth.* This fellow 's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings.
I 'ld whistle her off and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declined
Into the vale of years,—yet that 's not much—
She 's gone. I am abused; and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Yet, 'tis the plague of great ones;
Prerogatived are they less than the base;

260. *haggard*, a wild untrained hawk.

'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death:
Even then this forked plague is fated to us
When we do quicken. Desdemona comes:

*Re-enter* DESDEMONA *and* EMILIA.

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!
I'll not believe 't.
*Des.* How now, my dear Othello!
Your dinner, and the generous islanders
By you invited, do attend your presence.
*Oth.* I am to blame.
*Des.* Why do you speak so faintly?
Are you not well?
*Oth.* I have a pain upon my forehead here.
*Des.* 'Faith, that 's with watching; 'twill away again:
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
It will be well.
*Oth.* Your napkin is too little:
[*He puts the handkerchief from him; and it drops.*
Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.
*Des.* I am very sorry that you are not well.
[*Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.*
*Emil.* I am glad I have found this napkin:
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,
For he conjured her she should ever keep it,
That she reserves it evermore about her
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,
And give 't Iago: what he will do with it
Heaven knows, not I;
I nothing but to please his fantasy.

296. *ta'en out*, copied.

*Re-enter* IAGO.

*Iago.* How now! what do you here alone?
*Emil.* Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.
*Iago.* A thing for me? it is a common thing—
*Emil.* Ha!
*Iago.* To have a foolish wife.
*Emil.* O, is that all? What will you give me now
For that same handkerchief?
*Iago.* What handkerchief?
*Emil.* What handkerchief!
Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;
That which so often you did bid me steal.
*Iago.* Hast stol'n it from her?
*Emil.* No, 'faith; she let it drop by negligence,
And, to the advantage, I, being here, took 't up.
Look, here it is.
*Iago.* A good wench; give it me.
*Emil.* What will you do with 't, that you have been so earnest
To have me filch it?
*Iago.* [*Snatching it*] Why, what 's that to you?
*Emil.* If 't be not for some purpose of import
Give 't me again: poor lady, she 'll run mad
When she shall lack it.
*Iago.* Be not acknown on 't; I have use for it.
Go, leave me. [*Exit Emilia.*
I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ: this may do something.
The Moor already changes with my poison:
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,

312. *to the advantage*, on the opportunity.
319. *Be not acknown on 't*, do not acknowledge it.

But with a little act upon the blood,
Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so:
Look, where he comes!

*Re-enter* OTHELLO.

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou owedst yesterday.

*Oth.* Ha! ha! false to me?

*Iago.* Why, how now, general! no more of that.

*Oth.* Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:
I swear 'tis better to be much abused
Than but to know't a little.

*Iago.* How now, my lord!

*Oth.* What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?
I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:
I slept the next night well, was free and merry;
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,
Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all.

*Iago.* I am sorry to hear this.

*Oth.* I had been happy, if the general camp,
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known. O, now for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats

328. *act*, action. 346. *Pioners*, sappers and miners.

The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation 's gone!
*Iago.* Is 't possible, my lord?
*Oth.* Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof;
Or, by the worth of man's eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
Than answer my waked wrath!
*Iago.* Is 't come to this?
*Oth.* Make me to see 't; or, at the least, so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
To hang a doubt on; or woe upon thy life!
*Iago.* My noble lord,—
*Oth.* If thou dost slander her and torture me,
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;
On horror's head horrors accumulate;
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed;
For nothing canst thou to damnation add
Greater than that.
*Iago.* O grace! O heaven forgive me!
Are you a man? have you a soul or sense?
God be wi' you; take mine office. O wretched fool,
That livest to make thine honesty a vice!
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,
To be direct and honest is not safe.
I thank you for this profit, and from hence
I 'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.
*Oth.* Nay, stay: thou shouldst be honest.
*Iago.* I should be wise, for honesty 's a fool
And loses that it works for.
*Oth.* By the world,
I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not.

I 'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I 'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!
*Iago.* I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:
I do repent me that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied?
*Oth.* Would! nay, I will.
*Iago.* And may: but, how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on—
Behold her topp'd?
*Oth.* Death and damnation! O!
*Iago.* It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
To bring them to that prospect: damn them then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster
More than their own! What then? how then?
What shall I say? Where 's satisfaction?
It is impossible you should see this,
Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
If imputation and strong circumstances,
Which lead directly to the door of truth,
Will give you satisfaction, you may have 't.
*Oth.* Give me a living reason she 's disloyal.
*Iago.* I do not like the office:
But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,
Prick'd to 't by foolish honesty and love,
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:

406. *circumstances*, indirect, circumstantial evidence.

One of this kind is Cassio:
In sleep I heard him say 'Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves;'
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
Cry 'O sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard,
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots,
That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd; and then
Cried 'Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!'
*Oth.* O monstrous! monstrous!
*Iago.* Nay, this was but his dream.
*Oth.* But this denoted a foregone conclusion:
'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.
*Iago.* And this may help to thicken other proofs
That do demonstrate thinly.
*Oth.* I'll tear her all to pieces.
*Iago.* Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done;
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?
*Oth.* I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.
*Iago.* I know not that: but such a handkerchief—
I am sure it was your wife's—did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.
*Oth.* If it be that,—
*Iago.* If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her with the other proofs.
*Oth.* O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven:
'Tis gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!

435. *Spotted*, embroidered. 447. *cell;* so Qq. Ff 'hell.'

Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aspics' tongues!
*Iago.* Yet be content.
*Oth.* O, blood, blood, blood!
*Iago.* Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.
*Oth.* Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont,
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heaven,
[*Kneels*] In the due reverence of a sacred vow
I here engage my words.
*Iago.* Do not rise yet.
[*Kneels*] Witness, you ever-burning lights above,
You elements that clip us round about,
Witness that here Iago doth give up
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,
And to obey shall be in me remorse,
What bloody business ever. [*They rise.*
*Oth.* I greet thy love,
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,
And will upon the instant put thee to 't:
Within these three days let me hear thee say
That Cassio 's not alive.

453. *Like to the Pontic sea*, etc. Probably derived from Holland's translation of Pliny (1601): 'And the sea Pontus evermore floweth and runneth out into Propontis, but the sea never retireth back again within Pontus.'

459. *capable*, far-reaching.

468. *remorse*, conscience.

*Iago.* My friend is dead; 'tis done at your request:
But let her live.

*Oth.* Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw,
To furnish me with some swift means of death
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

*Iago.* I am your own for ever. [*Exeunt.*

## Scene IV. *Before the castle.*

*Enter* Desdemona, Emilia, *and* Clown.

*Des.* Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

*Clo.* I dare not say he lies any where.

*Des.* Why, man?

*Clo.* He's a soldier, and for one to say a soldier lies, is stabbing.

*Des.* Go to: where lodges he?

*Clo.* To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.

*Des.* Can any thing be made of this?

*Clo.* I know not where he lodges, and for me to devise a lodging and say he lies here or he lies there, were to lie in mine own throat.

*Des.* Can you inquire him out, and be edified by report?

*Clo.* I will catechize the world for him; that is, make questions, and by them answer.

*Des.* Seek him, bid him come hither: tell him I have moved my lord on his behalf, and hope all will be well.

*Clo.* To do this is within the compass of man's wit; and therefore I will attempt the doing it.

[*Exit.*

*Des.* Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?
*Emil.* I know not, madam.
*Des.* Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
Full of crusadoes: and, but my noble Moor
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
To put him to ill thinking.
*Emil.* Is he not jealous?
*Des.* Who, he? I think the sun where he was born
Drew all such humours from him.
*Emil.* Look, where he comes.
*Des.* I will not leave him now till Cassio
Be call'd to him.

*Enter* OTHELLO.

How is't with you, my lord?
*Oth.* Well, my good lady. [*Aside*] O, hardness to dissemble!—
How do you, Desdemona?
*Des.* Well, my good lord.
*Oth.* Give me your hand: this hand is moist, my lady.
*Des.* It yet hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.
*Oth.* This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:
Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout;
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank one.

26. *crusadoes*, Portuguese gold coins.
38. *liberal*, wanton.
40. *sequester*, sequestration.

*Des.* You may, indeed, say so;
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.
*Oth.* A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;
But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.
*Des.* I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.
*Oth.* What promise, chuck?
*Des.* I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.
*Oth.* I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;
Lend me thy handkerchief.
*Des.* Here, my lord.
*Oth.* That which I gave you.
*Des.* I have it not about me.
*Oth.* Not?
*Des.* No, indeed, my lord.
*Oth.* That 's a fault. That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,
'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
Entirely to her love, but if she lost it
Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies: she dying gave it me;
And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
To give it her. I did so: and take heed on 't;
Make it a darling like your precious eye;
To lose 't or give 't away were such perdition
As nothing else could match.
*Des.* Is 't possible?
*Oth.* 'Tis true: there 's magic in the web of it:
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world

56. *an Egyptian;* probably a gipsy. 63. *fancies,* loves.

The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;
And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
Conserved of maidens' hearts.

*Des.* Indeed! is 't true?

*Oth.* Most veritable; therefore look to 't well.

*Des.* Then would to God that I had never seen 't!

*Oth.* Ha! wherefore?

*Des.* Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

*Oth.* Is 't lost? is 't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

*Des.* Heaven bless us!

*Oth.* Say you?

*Des.* It is not lost; but what an if it were?

*Oth.* How!

*Des.* I say, it is not lost.

*Oth.* Fetch 't, let me see 't

*Des.* Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.
This is a trick to put me from my suit:
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

*Oth.* Fetch me the handkerchief: my mind misgives.

*Des.* Come, come;
You 'll never meet a more sufficient man.

*Oth.* The handkerchief!

*Des.* I pray, talk me of Cassio.

*Oth.* The handkerchief!

*Des.* A man that all his time
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,
Shared dangers with you,—

*Oth.* The handkerchief!

*Des.* In sooth, you are to blame.

*Oth.* Away! [*Exit.*

74. *mummy*, a preparation made from corpses.

*Emil.* Is not this man jealous?
*Des.* I ne'er saw this before.
Sure, there 's some wonder in this handkerchief:
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.
*Emil.* 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man:
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;
They eat us hungerly, and when they are full,
They belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband!

*Enter* Cassio *and* Iago.

*Iago.* There is no other way; 'tis she must do 't:
And, lo, the happiness! go, and importune her.
*Des.* How now, good Cassio! what 's the news with you?
*Cas.* Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you
That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love
Whom I with all the office of my heart
Entirely honour: I would not be delay'd
If my offence be of such mortal kind
That nor my service past, nor present sorrows,
Nor purposed merit in futurity,
Can ransom me into his love again,
But to know so must be my benefit;
So shall I clothe me in a forced content,
And shut myself up in some other course,
To fortune's alms.
*Des.* Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio!
My advocation is not now in tune;
My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him
Were he in favour as in humour alter'd.
So help me every spirit sanctified,
As I have spoken for you all my best
And stood within the blank of his displeasure

104. *but*, merely. 108. *happiness*, good luck.
128. *blank*, aim.

For my free speech! you must awhile be patient:
What I can do I will; and more I will
Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.
*Iago.* Is my lord angry?
*Emil.* He went hence but now,
And certainly in strange unquietness.
*Iago.* Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
When it hath blown his ranks into the air,
And, like the devil, from his very arm
Puff'd his own brother:—and can he be angry?
Something of moment then: I will go meet him:
There 's matter in 't indeed if he be angry.
*Des.* I prithee, do so. [*Exit Iago.*
Something, sure, of state,
Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd practice
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,
Hath puddled his clear spirit; and in such cases
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;
For let our finger ache, and it indues
Our other healthful members even to that sense
Of pain: nay, we must think men are not gods,
Nor of them look for such observancy
As fits the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,
I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,
And he 's indicted falsely.
*Emil.* Pray heaven it be state-matters, as you think,
And no conception nor no jealous toy
Concerning you.
*Des.* Alas the day, I never gave him cause!

141. *practice*, plot. 149. *observancy*, obsequious attention. 156. *toy*, caprice.

*Emil.* But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;
They are not ever jealous for the cause,
But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster
Begot upon itself, born on itself.
*Des.* Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!
*Emil.* Lady, amen.
*Des.* I will go seek him. Cassio, walk hereabout:
If I do find him fit, I 'll move your suit,
And seek to effect it to my uttermost.
*Cas.* I humbly thank your ladyship.
[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*

*Enter* BIANCA.

*Bian.* Save you, friend Cassio!
*Cas.* What make you from home?
How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?
I' faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.
*Bian.* And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
What, keep a week away? seven days and nights?
Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,
More tedious than the dial eight score times?
O weary reckoning!
*Cas.* Pardon me, Bianca:
I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd;
But I shall, in a more continuate time,
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
[*Giving her Desdemona's handkerchief.*
Take me this work out.
*Bian.* O Cassio, whence came this?
This is some token from a newer friend:
To the felt absence now I feel a cause:
Is 't come to this? Well, well.

178. *more continuate*, less distracted.
180. *Take . . . out*, copy.

*Cas.* Go to, woman!
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,
From whence you have them. You are jealous now
That this is from some mistress, some remembrance:
No, in good troth, Bianca.
*Bian.* Why, whose is it?
*Cas.* I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.
I like the work well: ere it be demanded—
As like enough it will—I 'ld have it copied:
Take it, and do 't; and leave me for this time.
*Bian.* Leave you! wherefore?
*Cas.* I do attend here on the general;
And think it no addition, nor my wish,
To have him see me woman'd.
*Bian.* Why, I pray you?
*Cas.* Not that I love you not.
*Bian.* But that you do not love me.
I pray you, bring me on the way a little,
And say if I shall see you soon at night.
*Cas.* 'Tis but a little way that I can bring you;
For I attend here: but I 'll see you soon.
*Bian.* 'Tis very good; I must be circumstanced.
[*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I. *Cyprus. Before the castle.*

*Enter* OTHELLO *and* IAGO.

*Iago.* Will you think so?
*Oth.* Think so, Iago!

201. *be circumstanced*, submit to circumstances.

*Iago.* What,
To kiss in private?
*Oth.* An unauthorized kiss.
*Iago.* Or to be naked with her friend in bed
An hour or more, not meaning any harm?
*Oth.* Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!
It is hypocrisy against the devil:
They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.
*Iago.* So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip:
But if I give my wife a handkerchief,—
*Oth.* What then?
*Iago.* Why, then, 'tis hers, my lord; and, being hers,
She may, I think, bestow 't on any man.
*Oth.* She is protectress of her honour too:
May she give that?
*Iago.* Her honour is an essence that 's not seen;
They have it very oft that have it not:
But, for the handkerchief,—
*Oth.* By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.
Thou said'st—O, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,
Boding to all—he had my handkerchief.
*Iago.* Ay, what of that?
*Oth.* That 's not so good now.
*Iago.* What,
If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?
Or heard him say,—as knaves be such abroad,
Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convinced or supplied them, cannot choose
But they must blab—
*Oth.* Hath he said any thing?

*Iago.* He hath, my lord; but be you well assured,
No more than he 'll unswear.
*Oth.* What hath he said?
*Iago.* 'Faith, that he did—I know not what he did.
*Oth.* What? what?
*Iago.* Lie—
*Oth.* With her?
*Iago.* With her, on her; what you will.
*Oth.* Lie with her! lie on her! We say lie on her, when they belie her. Lie with her! that 's fulsome.—Handkerchief—confessions—handkerchief!—To confess, and be hanged for his labour; —first to be hanged, and then to confess.—I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction. It is not words that shake me thus. Pish! Noses, ears, and lips.—Is 't possible?—Confess—handkerchief!—O devil! [*Falls in a trance.*
*Iago.* Work on,
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,
All guiltless, meet reproach. What, ho! my lord!
My lord, I say! Othello!

*Enter* CASSIO.

How now, Cassio!
*Cas.* What 's the matter?
*Iago.* My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy:
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.
*Cas.* Rub him about the temples.
*Iago.* No, forbear;
The lethargy must have his quiet course:
If not, he foams at mouth and by and by
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs:

Do you withdraw yourself a little while,
He will recover straight: when he is gone,
I would on great occasion speak with you.
[*Exit Cassio.*
How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?
*Oth.* Dost thou mock me?
*Iago.* I mock you! no, by heaven.
Would you would bear your fortune like a man!
*Oth.* A horned man's a monster and a beast.
*Iago.* There's many a beast then in a populous city,
And many a civil monster.
*Oth.* Did he confess it?
*Iago.* Good sir, be a man;
Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked
May draw with you: there's millions now alive
That nightly lie in those unproper beds
Which they dare swear peculiar: your case is better.
O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,
And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;
And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.
*Oth.* O, thou art wise; 'tis certain.
*Iago.* Stand you awhile apart;
Confine yourself but in a patient list.
Whilst you were here o'erwhelmed with your grief—
A passion most unsuiting such a man—
Cassio came hither: I shifted him away,
And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy,
Bade him anon return and here speak with me;
The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,
That dwell in every region of his face;

69. *unproper*, no longer their own.
72. *secure*, unsuspected.
76. *a patient list*, the limits of patience.

For I will make him tell the tale anew,
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
He hath, and is again to cope your wife:
I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience;
Or I shall say you are all in all in spleen,
And nothing of a man.
*Oth.* Dost thou hear, Iago?
I will be found most cunning in my patience;
But—dost thou hear?—most bloody.
*Iago.* That 's not amiss;
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?
[*Othello retires.*
Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
A housewife that by selling her desires
Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature
That dotes on Cassio; as 'tis the strumpet's plague
To beguile many and be beguiled by one:
He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
From the excess of laughter. Here he comes:

*Re-enter* CASSIO.

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
And his unbookish jealousy must construe
Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures and light behaviour,
Quite in the wrong. How do you now, lieutenant?
*Cas.* The worser that you give me the addition
Whose want even kills me.
*Iago.* Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on 't.
[*Speaking lower*] Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power,
How quickly should you speed!
*Cas.* Alas, poor caitiff!
*Oth.* Look, how he laughs already!
*Iago.* I never knew woman love man so.

105. *addition*, title.

*Cas.* Alas, poor rogue! I think, i' faith, she loves me.

*Oth.* Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

*Iago.* Do you hear, Cassio?

*Oth.* Now he importunes him To tell it o'er: go to; well said, well said.

*Iago.* She gives it out that you shall marry her: Do you intend it?

*Cas.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Oth.* Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?

*Cas.* I marry her! what? a customer! Prithee, bear some charity to my wit; do not think it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!

*Oth.* So, so, so, so: they laugh that win.

*Iago.* 'Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

*Cas.* Prithee, say true.

*Iago.* I am a very villain else.

*Oth.* Have you scored me? Well.

*Cas.* This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

*Oth.* Iago beckons me; now he begins the story.

*Cas.* She was here even now; she haunts me in every place. I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes the bauble, and, by this hand, she falls me thus about my neck—

*Oth.* Crying 'O dear Cassio!' as it were: his gesture imports it.

*Cas.* So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so hales, and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!

*Oth.* Now he tells how she plucked him to

121. *Roman;* the term is suggested by 'triumph.'

130. *scored me,* (probably) made your reckoning against me.

my chamber. O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

*Cas.* Well, I must leave her company.

*Iago.* Before me! look, where she comes.

*Cas.* 'Tis such another fitchew! marry, a perfumed one.

*Enter* BIANCA.

What do you mean by this haunting of me?

*Bian.* Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work?—A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There; give it your hobby-horse: wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

*Cas.* How now, my sweet Bianca! how now! how now!

*Oth.* By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

*Bian.* An you'll come to supper to-night, you may; an you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [*Exit.*

*Iago.* After her, after her.

*Cas.* 'Faith, I must; she'll rail in the street else.

*Iago.* Will you sup there?

*Cas.* 'Faith, I intend so.

*Iago.* Well, I may chance to see you: for I would very fain speak with you.

*Cas.* Prithee, come; will you?

*Iago.* Go to; say no more. [*Exit Cassio.*

*Oth.* [*Advancing*] How shall I murder him, Iago?

*Iago.* Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

*Oth.* O Iago!

*Iago.* And did you see the handkerchief?

*Oth.* Was that mine?

*Iago.* Yours, by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

*Oth.* I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

*Iago.* Nay, you must forget that.

*Oth.* Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned to-night; for she shall not live: no, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks.

*Iago.* Nay, that's not your way.

*Oth.* Hang her! I do but say what she is: so delicate with her needle: an admirable musician: O! she will sing the savageness out of a bear: of so high and plenteous wit and invention:—

*Iago.* She's the worse for all this.

*Oth.* O, a thousand thousand times: and then, of so gentle a condition!

*Iago.* Ay, too gentle.

*Oth.* Nay, that's certain: but yet the pity of it, Iago! O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

*Iago.* If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend; for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

*Oth.* I will chop her into messes: cuckold me!

*Iago.* O, 'tis foul in her.

*Oth.* With mine officer!

*Iago.* That's fouler.

204. *condition*, disposition.

*Oth.* Get me some poison, Iago; this night: I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again: this night, Iago.

*Iago.* Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

*Oth.* Good, good: the justice of it pleases: very good.

*Iago.* And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker: you shall hear more by midnight.

*Oth.* Excellent good. [*A trumpet within.*] What trumpet is that same?

*Iago.* Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico
Come from the duke: and, see, your wife is with him.

*Enter* LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, *and* Attendants.

*Lod.* Save you, worthy general!

*Oth.* With all my heart, sir.

*Lod.* The duke and senators of Venice greet you. [*Gives him a letter.*

*Oth.* I kiss the instrument of their pleasures. [*Opens the letter, and reads.*

*Des.* And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

*Iago.* I am very glad to see you, signior;
Welcome to Cyprus.

*Lod.* I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

*Iago.* Lives, sir.

*Des.* Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord
An unkind breach: but you shall make all well.

*Oth.* Are you sure of that?

*Des.* My lord?

*Oth.* [*Reads*] 'This fail you not to do, as you will—'

*Lod.* He did not call; he 's busy in the paper.
Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

*Des.* A most unhappy one: I would do much
To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

*Oth.* Fire and brimstone!

*Des.* My lord?

*Oth.* Are you wise?

*Des.* What, is he angry?

*Lod.* May be the letter moved him;
For, as I think, they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.

*Des.* Trust me, I am glad on 't.

*Oth.* Indeed!

*Des.* My lord?

*Oth.* I am glad to see you mad.

*Des.* Why, sweet Othello,—

*Oth.* [*Striking her*] Devil!

*Des.* I have not deserved this.

*Lod.* My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw 't: 'tis very much:
Make her amends; she weeps.

*Oth.* O devil, devil!
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.
Out of my sight!

*Des.* I will not stay to offend you. [*Going.*

*Lod.* Truly, an obedient lady:
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

*Oth.* Mistress!

*Des.* My lord?

*Oth.* What would you with her, sir?

*Lod.* Who, I, my lord?

*Oth.* Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn:

Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,
Very obedient. Proceed you in your tears.
Concerning this, sir,—O well-painted passion!—
I am commanded home. Get you away;
I'll send for you anon. Sir, I obey the mandate,
And will return to Venice. Hence, avaunt!
[*Exit Desdemona.*
Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, to-night,
I do entreat that we may sup together:
You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus.—Goats and monkeys! [*Exit.*

*Lod.* Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
Call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,
Could neither graze nor pierce?

*Iago.* He is much changed.

*Lod.* Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

*Iago.* He's that he is: I may not breathe my censure
What he might be: if what he might he is not,
I would to heaven he were!

*Lod.* What, strike his wife!

*Iago.* 'Faith, that was not so well; yet would I knew
That stroke would prove the worst!

*Lod.* Is it his use?
Or did the letters work upon his blood,
And new-create this fault?

*Iago.* Alas, alas!
It is not honesty in me to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,

And his own courses will denote him so
That I may save my speech: do but go after,
And mark how he continues.
*Lod.* I am sorry that I am deceived in him.
[*Exeunt.*

## Scene II. *A room in the castle.*

*Enter* Othello *and* Emilia.

*Oth.* You have seen nothing then?
*Emil.* Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.
*Oth.* Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.
*Emil.* But then I saw no harm, and then I heard
Each syllable that breath made up between them.
*Oth.* What, did they never whisper?
*Emil.* Never, my lord.
*Oth.* Nor send you out o' the way?
*Emil.* Never.
*Oth.* To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?
*Emil.* Never, my lord.
*Oth.* That 's strange.
*Emil.* I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch have put this in your head,
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,
There 's no man happy; the purest of their wives
Is foul as slander.
*Oth.* Bid her come hither: go.
[*Exit Emilia.*
She says enough; yet she 's a simple bawd
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,

A closet lock and key of villanous secrets:
And yet she 'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do 't.

*Enter* DESDEMONA *with* EMILIA.

*Des.* My lord, what is your will?
*Oth.* Pray, chuck, come hither.
*Des.* What is your pleasure?
*Oth.* Let me see your eyes;
Look in my face.
*Des.* What horrible fancy 's this?
*Oth.* [*To Emilia*] Some of your function, mistress;
Leave procreants alone and shut the door;
Cough, or cry 'hem,' if any body come:
Your mystery, your mystery: nay, dispatch. [*Exit Emilia.*
*Des.* Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words.
*Oth.* Why, what art thou?
*Des.* Your wife, my lord; your true
And loyal wife.
*Oth.* Come, swear it, damn thyself;
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double damn'd;
Swear thou art honest.
*Des.* Heaven doth truly know it.
*Oth.* Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.
*Des.* To whom, my lord? with whom? how am I false?

27. *Some of your function;* something that belongs to your occupation.
30. *mystery,* trade.

*Oth.* O Desdemona! Away! away! away!
*Des.* Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep?
Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?
If haply you my father do suspect
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me: if you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.
*Oth.* Had it pleased heaven
To try me with affliction; had they rain'd
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head,
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,
I should have found in some place of my soul
A drop of patience: but, alas, to make me
A fixed figure for the time of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at!
Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:
But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
Where either I must live, or bear no life;
The fountain from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,
Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,—
Ay, there, look grim as hell!
*Des.* I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.
*Oth.* O, ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,
That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born!

54. *the time of scorn*, the scornful time, the mocking age. ['Figure' is apparently used in a double sense: (1) number of the hour; (2) object. L.]

*Des.* Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?
*Oth.* Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
Made to write 'whore' upon? What committed!
Committed! O thou public commoner!
I should make very forges of my cheeks,
That would to cinders burn up modesty,
Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!
Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks,
The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets
Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,
And will not hear it. What committed!
Impudent strumpet!
*Des.* By heaven, you do me wrong.
*Oth.* Are not you a strumpet?
*Des.* No, as I am a Christian:
If to preserve this vessel for my lord
From any other foul unlawful touch
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.
*Oth.* What, not a whore?
*Des.* No, as I shall be saved.
*Oth.* Is 't possible?
*Des.* O, heaven forgive us!
*Oth.* I cry you mercy, then:
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice
That married with Othello. [*Raising his voice*]
You, mistress,
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,
And keep the gate of hell!

*Re-enter* EMILIA.

You, you, ay, you!
We have done our course; there 's money for your pains:
I pray you, turn the key and keep our counsel.
[*Exit.*
*Emil.* Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?

How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?
*Des.* 'Faith, half asleep.
*Emil.* Good madam, what 's the matter with my lord?
*Des.* With who?
*Emil.* Why, with my lord, madam.
*Des.* Who is thy lord?
*Emil.* He that is yours, sweet lady.
*Des.* I have none: do not talk to me, Emilia;
I cannot weep; nor answer have I none,
But what should go by water. Prithee, to-night
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets: remember;
And call thy husband hither.
*Emil.* Here 's a change indeed! [*Exit.*
*Des.* 'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.
How have I been behaved, that he might stick
The small'st opinion on my least misuse?

*Re-enter* EMILIA *with* IAGO.

*Iago.* What is your pleasure, madam? How is 't with you!
*Des.* I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks:
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding.
*Iago.* What 's the matter, lady?
*Emil.* Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her,
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,
As true hearts cannot bear.
*Des.* Am I that name, Iago?
*Iago.* What name, fair lady?
*Des.* Such as she says my lord did say I was.
*Emil.* He call'd her whore: a beggar in his drink

109. *opinion*, suspicion. 109. *misuse*, fault.

Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.

*Iago.* Why did he so?

*Des.* I do not know; I am sure I am none such.

*Iago.* Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

*Emil.* Hath she forsook so many noble matches,
Her father and her country and her friends,
To be call'd whore? would it not make one weep?

*Des.* It is my wretched fortune.

*Iago.* Beshrew him for 't!
How comes this trick upon him?

*Des.* Nay, heaven doth know.

*Emil.* I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain,
Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devised this slander; I 'll be hang'd else.

*Iago.* Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible.

*Des.* If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

*Emil.* A halter pardon him! and hell gnaw his bones!
Why should he call her whore? who keeps her company?
What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?
The Moor 's abused by some most villanous knave,
Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.
O heaven, that such companions thou 'ldst unfold,
And put in every honest hand a whip
To lash the rascals naked through the world
Even from the east to the west!

*Iago.* Speak within door.

*Emil.* O, fie upon them! Some such squire he was

121. *callet*, a low woman.
125. *forsook*, declined.
130. *eternal*, infernal.
132. *cogging*, cheating.

That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.
*Iago.* You are a fool; go to.
*Des.* O good Iago,
What shall I do to win my lord again?
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form;
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will—though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love. I cannot say 'whore:'
It doth abhor me now I speak the word;
To do the act that might the addition earn
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.
*Iago.* I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour:
The business of the state does him offence,
And he does chide with you.
*Des.* If 'twere no other,—
*Iago.* 'Tis but so, I warrant.
[*Trumpets within.*
Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!
The messengers of Venice stay the meat:
Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.
[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*

*Enter* RODERIGO.

How now, Roderigo!

160. *defeat*, destroy. 162. *It doth abhor me*, it is abhorrent to me. 163. *addition*, title.

*Rod.* I do not find that thou dealest justly with me.

*Iago.* What in the contrary?

*Rod.* Every day thou daffest me with some device, Iago; and rather, as it seems to me now, keepest from me all conveniency than suppliest me with the least advantage of hope. I will indeed no longer endure it, nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace what already I have foolishly suffered.

*Iago.* Will you hear me, Roderigo?

*Rod.* 'Faith, I have heard too much, for your words and performances are no kin together.

*Iago.* You charge me most unjustly.

*Rod.* With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would half have corrupted a votarist: you have told me she hath received them and returned me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance, but I find none.

*Iago.* Well; go to; very well.

*Rod.* Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis not very well: nay, I think it is scurvy, and begin to find myself fopped in it.

*Iago.* Very well.

*Rod.* I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona: if she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

*Iago.* You have said now.

*Rod.* Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

179. *advantage*, occasion.
192. *sudden respect*, prompt notice (to be taken of me by her).

*Iago.* Why, now I see there 's mettle in thee, and even from this instant do build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

*Rod.* It hath not appeared.

*Iago.* I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your suspicion is not without wit and judgement. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, I mean purpose, courage and valour, this night show it: if thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery and devise engines for my life.

*Rod.* Well, what is it? is it within reason and compass?

*Iago.* Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

*Rod.* Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

*Iago.* O, no; he goes into Mauritania and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident: wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

*Rod.* How do you mean, removing of him?

*Iago.* Why, by making him uncapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

*Rod.* And that you would have me to do?

*Iago.* Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups to-night with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him: he knows not yet of his honourable fortune. If you will watch his

231. *lingered*, prolonged.

going thence, which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one, you may take him at your pleasure: I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supper-time, and the night grows to waste: about it.

*Rod.* I will hear further reason for this.

*Iago.* And you shall be satisfied. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III. *Another room in the castle.*

*Enter* OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, *and* Attendants.

*Lod.* I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

*Oth.* O, pardon me; 'twill do me good to walk.

*Lod.* Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

*Des.* Your honour is most welcome.

*Oth.* Will you walk, sir? O,—Desdemona,—

*Des.* My lord?

*Oth.* Get you to bed on the instant; I will be returned forthwith: dismiss your attendant there: look it be done.

*Des.* I will, my lord.

[*Exeunt Othello, Lodovico, and Attendants.*

*Emil.* How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.

*Des.* He says he will return incontinent:
He hath commanded me to go to bed,

And bade me to dismiss you.
*Emil.* Dismiss me!
*Des.* It was his bidding; therefore, good Emilia,
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu:
We must not now displease him.
*Emil.* I would you had never seen him!
*Des.* So would not I: my love doth so approve him,
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns,—
Prithee, unpin me,—have grace and favour in them.
*Emil.* I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.
*Des.* All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!
If I do die before thee, prithee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets.
*Emil.* Come, come, you talk.
*Des.* My mother had a maid call'd Barbara:
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad
And did forsake her: she had a song of 'willow;'
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,
And she died singing it: that song to-night
Will not go from my mind; I have much to do
But to go hang my head all at one side,
And sing it like poor Barbara. Prithee, dispatch.
*Emil.* Shall I go fetch your night-gown?
*Des.* No, unpin me here.
This Lodovico is a proper man.
*Emil.* A very handsome man.
*Des.* He speaks well.
*Emil.* I know a lady in Venice would have

28. *a song of 'willow.'* The original of Desdemona's song was printed by Percy in the *Reliques*, from a seventeenth-century version in the Pepysian collection, with the title, 'A Lover's Complaint, being forsaken of his Love.'

walked barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

*Des.* [*Singing*] The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow;
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow:
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;
Sing willow, willow, willow;
Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones;—
Lay by these:—
[*Singing*] Sing willow, willow, willow;
Prithee, hie thee; he 'll come anon:—
[*Singing*] Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve,—
Nay, that 's not next. — Hark! who is 't that knocks?

*Emil.* It 's the wind.

*Des.* [*Singing*] I call'd my love false love; but what said he then?
Sing willow, willow, willow:
If I court moe women, you 'll couch with moe men.—
So, get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch;
Doth that bode weeping?

*Emil.* 'Tis neither here nor there.

*Des.* I have heard it said so. O, these men, these men!
Dost thou in conscience think,—tell me, Emilia,—
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind?

*Emil.* There be some such, no question.

*Des.* Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

*Emil.* Why, would not you?
*Des.* No, by this heavenly light!
*Emil.* Nor I neither by this heavenly light;
I might do't as well i' the dark.
*Des.* Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?
*Emil.* The world's a huge thing: it is a great price
For a small vice.
*Des.* In troth, I think thou wouldst not.
*Emil.* In troth, I think I should; and undo't when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition; but, for the whole world,—why, who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't.
*Des.* Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong
For the whole world.
*Emil.* Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' the world; and having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.
*Des.* I do not think there is any such woman.
*Emil.* Yes, a dozen; and as many to the vantage as would store the world they played for.
But I do think it is their husbands' faults
If wives do fall: say that they slack their duties,
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,
Or scant our former having in despite;
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know

75. *exhibition*, allowance. 85. *to the vantage*, in addition.

Their wives have sense like them: they see and
smell
And have their palates both for sweet and sour.
As husbands have. What is it that they do
When they change us for others? Is it sport?
I think it is: and doth affection breed it?
I think it doth: is 't frailty that thus errs?
It is so too: and have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?
Then let them use us well: else let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.
*Des.* Good night, good night: heaven me such
uses send,
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!
[*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I. *Cyprus. A street.*

*Enter* IAGO *and* RODERIGO.

*Iago.* Here, stand behind this bulk; straight
will he come:
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home:
Quick, quick; fear nothing; I 'll be at thy elbow:
It makes us, or it mars us; think on that,
And fix most firm thy resolution.
*Rod.* Be near at hand; I may miscarry in 't.
*Iago.* Here, at thy hand: be bold, and take thy
stand. [*Retires.*
*Rod.* I have no great devotion to the deed;
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons:
'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword: he dies.

*Iago.* I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,
And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio,
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
Every way makes my gain: live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold and jewels that I bobb'd from him,
As gifts to Desdemona;
It must not be: if Cassio do remain,
He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly; and, besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril:
No, he must die. But so: I hear him coming.

*Enter* CASSIO.

*Rod.* I know his gait, 'tis he.—Villain, thou diest! [*Makes a pass at Cassio.*

*Cas.* That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,
But that my coat is better than thou know'st:
I will make proof of thine.
[*Draws, and wounds Roderigo.*

*Rod.* O, I am slain!
[*Iago from behind wounds Cassio in the leg, and exit.*

*Cas.* I am maim'd for ever. Help, ho! murder! murder! [*Falls.*

*Enter* OTHELLO.

*Oth.* The voice of Cassio: Iago keeps his word.

*Rod.* O, villain that I am!

*Oth.* It is even so.

*Cas.* O, help, ho! light! a surgeon!

*Oth.* 'Tis he:—O brave Iago, honest and just,
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!

11. *quat*, pimple.

Thou teachest me. Minion, your dear lies dead,
And your unblest fate hies: strumpet, I come.
Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted;
Thy bed, lust-stain'd, shall with lust's blood be spotted. [*Exit.*

*Enter* LODOVICO *and* GRATIANO.

*Cas.* What, ho! no watch? no passage? murder! murder!
*Gra.* 'Tis some mischance; the cry is very direful.
*Cas.* O, help!
*Lod.* Hark!
*Rod.* O wretched villain!
*Lod.* Two or three groan: it is a heavy night:
These may be counterfeits: let 's think 't unsafe
To come in to the cry without more help.
*Rod.* Nobody come? then shall I bleed to death.
*Lod.* Hark!

*Re-enter* IAGO, *with a light.*

*Gra.* Here 's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.
*Iago.* Who 's there? whose noise is this that cries on murder?
*Lod.* We do not know.
*Iago.* Did not you hear a cry?
*Cas.* Here, here! for heaven's sake, help me!
*Iago.* What 's the matter?
*Gra.* This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.
*Lod.* The same indeed; a very valiant fellow.
*Iago.* What are you here that cry so grievously?

37. *no passage*, no passers-by. L.

*Cas.* Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains:
Give me some help.
*Iago.* O me, lieutenant! what villains have
done this?
*Cas.* I think that one of them is hereabout,
And cannot make away.
*Iago.* O treacherous villains!
What are you there? come in, and give some
help. [*To Lodovico and Gratiano.*
*Rod.* O, help me here!
*Cas.* That 's one of them.
*Iago.* O murderous slave! O villain!
[*Stabs Roderigo.*
*Rod.* O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!
*Iago.* Kill men i' the dark!—Where be these
bloody thieves?—
How silent is this town!—Ho! murder! murder!—
What may you be? are you of good or evil?
*Lod.* As you shall prove us, praise us.
*Iago.* Signior Lodovico?
*Lod.* He, sir.
*Iago.* I cry you mercy. Here 's Cassio hurt by
villains.
*Gra.* Cassio!
*Iago.* How is 't, brother!
*Cas.* My leg is cut in two.
*Iago.* Marry, heaven forbid!
Light, gentlemen: I 'll bind it with my shirt.

*Enter* Bianca.

*Bian.* What is the matter, ho? who is 't that
cried?
*Iago.* Who is 't that cried!
*Bian.* O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio!
O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!
*Iago.* O notable strumpet! Cassio, may you suspect

Who they should be that have thus mangled you?
*Cas.* No.
*Gra.* I am sorry to find you thus: I have been to seek you.
*Iago.* Lend me a garter. So. O, for a chair,
To bear him easily hence!
*Bian.* Alas, he faints! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!
*Iago.* Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury.
Patience awhile, good Cassio. Come, come;
Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?
Alas, my friend and my dear countryman
Roderigo! no:—yes, sure:—O heaven! Roderigo.
*Gra.* What, of Venice?
*Iago.* Even he, sir: did you know him?
*Gra.* Know him! ay.
*Iago.* Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,
That so neglected you.
*Gra.* I am glad to see you.
*Iago.* How do you, Cassio? O, a chair, a chair!
*Gra.* Roderigo!
*Iago.* He, he, 'tis he. [*A chair brought in.*] O, that's well said; the chair.
Some good man bear him carefully from hence;
I'll fetch the general's surgeon. [*To Bianca*] For you, mistress,
Save you your labour. He that lies slain here, Cassio,
Was my dear friend: what malice was between you?
*Cas.* None in the world; nor do I know the man.
*Iago.* [*To Bian.*] What, look you pale? O, bear him out o' the air.
[*Cassio and Roderigo are borne off.*

Stay you, good gentlemen. Look you pale, mistress?
Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?
Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.
Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her:
Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,
Though tongues were out of use.

*Enter* EMILIA.

*Emil.* 'Las, what's the matter? what's the matter, husband?

*Iago.* Cassio hath here been set on in the dark
By Roderigo and fellows that are scaped:
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

*Emil.* Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!

*Iago.* This is the fruit of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night.
[*To Bianca*] What, do you shake at that?

*Bian.* He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake not.

*Iago.* O, did he so? I charge you, go with me.

*Emil.* Fie, fie upon thee, strumpet!

*Bian.* I am no strumpet; but of life as honest
As you that thus abuse me.

*Emil.* As I! foh! fie upon thee!

*Iago.* Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd.
Come, mistress, you must tell 's another tale.
Emilia, run you to the citadel,
And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd.
Will you go on? I pray. [*Aside*] This is the night
That either makes me or fordoes me quite.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A bedchamber in the castle:* DESDEMONA *in bed asleep; a light burning.*

*Enter* OTHELLO.

*Oth.* It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!—
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then put out the light:
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree.
[*Kissing her.*
Ah, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after. One more, and this the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

*Des.* Who's there? Othello?

*Oth.* Ay, Desdemona.

*Des.* Will you come to bed, my lord?

1. *It is the cause*, the cause of justice (v. 17), to be executed upon an adulteress, and hence unfit to be named to the 'chaste stars.'

*Oth.* Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?
*Des.* Ay, my lord.
*Oth.* If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.
*Des.* Alas, my lord, what do you mean by that?
*Oth.* Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No; heaven forfend! I would not kill thy soul.
*Des.* Talk you of killing?
*Oth.* Ay, I do.
*Des.* Then heaven
Have mercy on me!
*Oth.* Amen, with all my heart!
*Des.* If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.
*Oth.* Hum!
*Des.* And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then
When your eyes roll so: why I should fear I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.
*Oth.* Think on thy sins.
*Des.* They are loves I bear to you.
*Oth.* Ay, and for that thou diest.
*Des.* That death 's unnatural that kills for loving.
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:
These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.
*Oth.* Peace, and be still!
*Des.* I will so. What 's the matter?
*Oth.* That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee
Thou gavest to Cassio.
*Des.* No, by my life and soul!
Send for the man, and ask him.
*Oth.* Sweet soul, take heed,

Take heed of perjury ; thou art on thy death-bed.
*Des.* Ay, but not yet to die.
*Oth.* Yes, presently :
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin ;
For to deny each article with oath
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.
*Des.* Then Lord have mercy on me !
*Oth.* I say, amen.
*Des.* And have you mercy too ! I never did
Offend you in my life ; never loved Cassio
But with such general warranty of heaven
As I might love ; I never gave him token.
*Oth.* By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in 's hand.
O perjured woman ! thou dost stone my heart,
And makest me call what I intend to do
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice :
I saw the handkerchief.
*Des.* He found it then ;
I never gave it him : send for him hither ;
Let him confess a truth.
*Oth.* He hath confess'd.
*Des.* What, my lord ?
*Oth.* That he hath used thee.
*Des.* How ? unlawfully ?
*Oth.* Ay.
*Des.* He will not say so.
*Oth.* No, his mouth is stopp'd ;
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for 't.
*Des.* O ! my fear interprets : what, is he dead ?
*Oth.* Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
Had stomach for them all.
*Des.* Alas ! he is betray'd and I undone.

52. *presently*, forthwith.

*Oth.* Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?
*Des.* O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!
*Oth.* Down, strumpet!
*Des.* Kill me to-morrow: let me live to-night!
*Oth.* Nay, if you strive,—
*Des.* But half an hour!
*Oth.* Being done, there is no pause.
*Des.* But while I say one prayer!
*Oth.* It is too late.
[*He stifles her.*
*Emil.* [*Within*] My lord, my lord! what, ho! my lord, my lord!
*Oth.* What noise is this? Not dead? not yet quite dead?
I that am cruel am yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain:
So, so.
*Emil.* [*Within*] What, ho! my lord, my lord!
*Oth.* Who's there?
*Emil.* [*Within*] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you!
*Oth.* Yes: 'tis Emilia. By and by. She's dead.
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death.—
The noise was here. Ha! no more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were 't good?—
I think she stirs again:—no. What's best to do?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:
My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
O, insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

101. *yawn*, as if in bewildered wonder.

*Emil.* [*Within*] I do beseech you
That I may speak with you, O, good my lord!
*Oth.* I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia:
Soft; by and by. Let me the curtains draw.
Where art thou? [*Unlocks the door.*

*Enter* EMILIA.

What 's the matter with thee now?
*Emil.* O, my good lord, yonder 's foul murders done!
*Oth.* What, now?
*Emil.* But now, my lord.
*Oth.* It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont,
And makes men mad.
*Emil.* Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian
Call'd Roderigo.
*Oth.* Roderigo kill'd!
And Cassio kill'd!
*Emil.* No, Cassio is not kill'd.
*Oth.* Not Cassio kill'd! then murder 's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.
*Des.* O, falsely, falsely murder'd!
*Emil.* Alas, what cry is that?
*Oth.* That! what?
*Emil.* Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice.
Help! help, ho! help! O lady, speak again!
Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!
*Des.* A guiltless death I die.
*Emil.* O, who hath done this deed?
*Des.* Nobody; I myself. Farewell:
Commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell! [*Dies.*
*Oth.* Why, how should she be murder'd?
*Emil.* Alas, who knows?

*Oth.* You heard her say herself, it was not I.
*Emil.* She said so: I must needs report the truth.
*Oth.* She 's like a liar gone to burning hell:
'Twas I that kill'd her.
*Emil.* O, the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil!
*Oth.* She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.
*Emil.* Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.
*Oth.* She was false as water.
*Emil.* Thou art rash as fire, to say
That she was false: O, she was heavenly true!
*Oth.* Cassio did top her; ask thy husband else.
O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.
*Emil.* My husband!
*Oth.* Thy husband.
*Emil.* That she was false to wedlock?
*Oth.* Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,
If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I 'ld not have sold her for it.
*Emil.* My husband!
*Oth.* Ay, 'twas he that told me first:
An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.
*Emil.* My husband!
*Oth.* What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy husband.
*Emil.* O mistress, villany hath made mocks with love!
My husband say that she was false!
*Oth.* He, woman;
I say thy husband: dost understand the word?

My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.
*Emil.* If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart:
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.
*Oth.* Ha!
*Emil.* Do thy worst:
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven
Than thou wast worthy her.
*Oth.* Peace, you were best.
*Emil.* Thou hast not half that power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed—
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives. Help! help, ho! help!
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress! Murder! murder!

*Enter* MONTANO, GRATIANO, IAGO, *and others.*

*Mon.* What is the matter? How now, general!
*Emil.* O, are you come, Iago? you have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.
*Gra.* What is the matter?
*Emil.* Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man:
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false:
I know thou didst not, thou 'rt not such a villain:
Speak, for my heart is full.
*Iago.* I told him what I thought, and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.
*Emil.* But did you ever tell him she was false?
*Iago.* I did.
*Emil.* You told a lie; an odious, damned lie;
Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie.

She false with Cassio!—did you say with Cassio?
*Iago.* With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.
*Emil.* I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak:
My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed,—
*All.* O heavens forfend!
*Emil.* And your reports have set the murder on.
*Oth.* Nay, stare not, masters: it is true, indeed.
*Gra.* 'Tis a strange truth.
*Mon.* O monstrous act!
*Emil.* Villany, villany, villany!
I think upon 't: I think: I smell 't: O villany!—
I thought so then: I 'll kill myself for grief:—
O villany, villany!
*Iago.* What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.
*Emil.* Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak:
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.
*Oth.* O! O! O! [*He falls on the bed.*
*Emil.* Nay, lay thee down and roar;
For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent
That e'er did lift up eye.
*Oth.* [*Rising*] O, she was foul!
I scarce did know you, uncle: there lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopp'd:
I know this act shows horrible and grim.
*Gra.* Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead:
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain: did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,

Yea, curse his better angel from his side,
And fall to reprobation.

*Oth.* 'Tis pitiful; but yet Iago knows
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed; Cassio confess'd it:
And she did gratify his amorous works
With that recognizance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand:
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

*Emil.* O heaven! O heavenly powers!

*Iago.* Come, hold your peace.

*Emil.* 'Twill out, 'twill out: I peace!
No, I will speak as liberal as the north:
Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I 'll speak.

*Iago.* Be wise, and get you home.

*Emil.* I will not.

[*Iago offers to stab Emilia*

*Gra.* Fie!
Your sword upon a woman?

*Emil.* O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou speak'st of
I found by fortune and did give my husband;
For often with a solemn earnestness,
More than indeed belong'd to such a trifle,
He begg'd of me to steal it.

*Iago.* Villanous whore!

*Emil.* She give it Cassio! no, alas! I found it,
And I did give 't my husband.

*Iago.* Filth, thou liest!

*Emil.* By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.
O murderous coxcomb! what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

*Oth.* Are there no stones in heaven

220. *liberal*, unrestrainedly.

But what serve for the thunder?—Precious villain!
[*He runs at Iago: Iago, from behind, stabs Emilia, and exit.*
*Gra.* The woman falls; sure, he hath kill'd his wife.
*Emil.* Ay, ay: O, lay me by my mistress' side.
*Gra.* He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.
*Mon.* 'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damned slave.
[*Exeunt Montano and Gratiano.*
*Oth.* I am not valiant neither,
But every puny whipster gets my sword:
But why should honour outlive honesty?
Let it go all.
*Emil.* What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan,
And die in music. [*Singing*] Willow, willow, willow.—
Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;
So speaking as I think, I die, I die. [*Dies.*
*Oth.* I have another weapon in this chamber;
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper:—
O, here it is. Uncle, I must come forth.
*Gra.* [*Within*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear:
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.
*Oth.* Look in upon me then and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

*Re-enter* GRATIANO.

*Gra.* What is the matter?

*Oth.* Behold, I have a weapon;
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh: I have seen the day,
That, with this little arm and this good sword,
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop: but, O vain boast!
Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear;
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires. Where should Othello go?
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!
Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!
Even like thy chastity. O cursed slave!
Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead!
Oh! Oh! Oh!

*Enter* LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO *carried in a chair, and* Officers *with* IAGO, *prisoner.*

*Lod.* Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

*Oth.* That 's he that was Othello: here I am.

*Lod.* Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

*Oth.* I look down towards his feet; but that 's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.
[*Wounds Iago*

*Lod.* Wrench his sword from him.

*Iago.* I bleed, sir; but not kill'd.
*Oth.* I am not sorry neither: I 'ld have thee live;
For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.
*Lod.* O thou Othello, that wert once so good,
Fall'n in the practice of a damned slave,
What shall be said to thee?
*Oth.* Why, any thing:
An honourable murderer, if you will;
For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.
*Lod.* This wretch hath part confess'd his villany:
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?
*Oth.* Ay.
*Cas.* Dear general, I never gave you cause.
*Oth.* I do believe it, and I ask you pardon.
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?
*Iago.* Demand me nothing: what you know, you know:
From this time forth I never will speak word.
*Lod.* What, not to pray?
*Gra.* Torments will ope your lips.
*Oth.* Well, thou dost best.
*Lod.* Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo;
And here another: the one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.
*Oth.* O villain!
*Cas.* Most heathenish and most gross!
*Lod.* Now here 's another discontented paper,
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;
But that belike Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him.

*Oth.* O the pernicious caitiff!
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?
*Cas.* I found it in my chamber:
And he himself confess'd but even now
That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose
Which wrought to his desire.
*Oth.* O fool! fool! fool!
*Cas.* There is besides in Roderigo's letter,
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came
That I was cast: and even but now he spake,
After long seeming dead, Iago hurt him,
Iago set him on.
*Lod.* You must forsake this room, and go with us:
Your power and your command is taken off,
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,
If there be any cunning cruelty
That can torment him much and hold him long,
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest,
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state. Come, bring him away.
*Oth.* Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know 't.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees

350. *Arabian trees*, the *acacia Arabica*. L.

Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him, thus. [*Stabs himself.*

*Lod.* O bloody period!

*Gra.* All that 's spoke is marr'd.

*Oth.* I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this;
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.
[*Falls on the bed, and dies.*

*Cas.* This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;
For he was great of heart.

*Lod.* [*To Iago*] O Spartan dog,
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
Look on the tragic loading of this bed;
This is thy work: the object poisons sight;
Let it be hid. Gratiano, keep the house,
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed on you. To you, lord governor,
Remains the censure of this hellish villain;
The time, the place, the torture: O, enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard; and to the state
This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [*Exeunt.*

END OF VOL. VIII

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